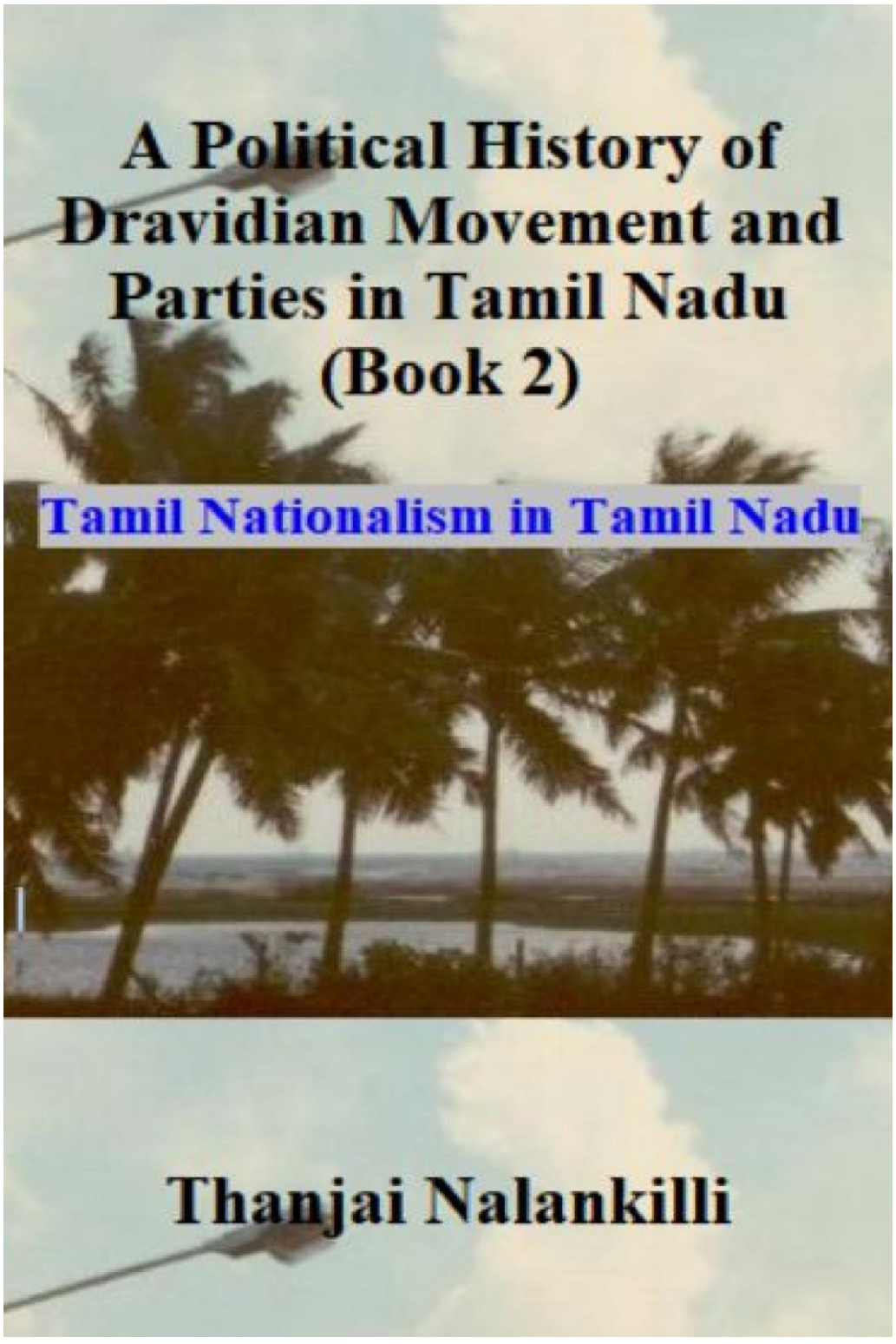
A Political History of Dravidian Movement and Parties in Tamil Nadu (Book 2)
Tamil Nationalism in Tamil Nadu
Thanjai Nalankilli

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A Political History of Dravidian Movement and Parties in Tamil Nadu

(Book 2)

Tamil Nationalism in Tamil Nadu

by

Thanjai Nalankilli

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Preface

Dravidian Parties (Dravida Parties) had the original goal of social reforms and protection of South India (the Dravidian states) from North Indian exploitation. However these parties found no support outside of Tamil Nadu. So they concentrate on social reforms in Tamil Nadu and protection of Tamil Nadu from North Indian exploitation.

This book consists of seventeen articles, each article discussing a single aspect in the political history of Dravidian parties in Tamil Nadu spanning the period 1916 to 2019.

Topics covered include Dravidian political parties earlier demand for independence of Tamil Nadu (or Dravida Nadu) from India, why and under what circumstances they gave up that demand in 1963, and speeches/statements on independence from former Chief Ministers Annadurai and Karunanidhi; Dravidian political parties demand for devolution of power to states (instead of independence) and statement on devolution from former Chief Minister Jayalalithaa; Dravidian political parties' support for Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka; Dravidian parties' service to the protection and development of Tamil language; election alliances with Hindi-belt-centric parties (Congress, BJP).

This is our second book on the history of Dravidian Movement. The first book is titled "Early History of Dravidian Parties in Tamil Nadu (1916-1959) (Book 1)".

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Dravidian Parties of Tamil Nadu (Tamil-Nadu-Centric Parties)
A Brief Overview
Part I: Beginning, Ideals and Splits

Thanjai Nalankilli

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2. Ideals and Goals of Dravidian Parties
3. Splits, Splits and More Splits
4. Other "Dravidian" Parties
5. Perunjchiththiranar Movement
6. To Contest Elections or Not?

Abreviations

AIADMK - All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
BJP - Bharatiya Janata Party
DK - Dravidar Kazhagam
DMK - Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
MDMK - Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
NTI - Naam Tamilar Katchi
PMK - Paattaali Makkal Katchi
VCK - Viduthalai Chiruththaikal Katchi

FRONT NOTE

Dravidians or Dravidans or Dravidars are those who speak one of the Dravida languages (Dravidian languages). Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil and Telugu are the top 4 Dravidian languages, each spoken by millions of people. These people live in all of South India as well as Northeastern Sri Lanka. Other Dravida languages are spoken mostly in northern India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Maldives. Some political leaders called South India, the region where Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil and Telugu are spoken, as Dravida Nadu (Dravida Country).

Dravidian Parties (Dravida Parties) had the original goal of social reforms and protection of South India (the Dravidian states) from North Indian exploitation. However these parties found no support outside of Tamil Nadu. So they concentrate on social reforms in Tamil Nadu and protection of the interests of Tamil Nadu from North Indian exploitation. So a more meaningful name for these parties is "Tamil-Nadu-centric parties" or "TN-centric parties".

1. Beginnings of the Dravidian Movement

Thenninthiyar Nala Urimai Sangam (South Indian Welfare Rights Organization), popularly known as the Neethi Katchi (Justice Party), was formed in November 1916 to protect the interests of non-Brahmins in the Madras Presidency (consisting of much of today's Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh). It morphed into Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) (Dravidian Association) in 1944 with almost all the goals and ideologies of the Justice Party.

2. Ideals and Goals of Dravidian Parties

What were the ideals and goals of Dravidar Kazhagam? The principal ideals and goals were social reform (such as ending religious superstitions, ending caste distinctions, empowerment of women), ending Brahmin dominance in Tamil Nadu educational institutions and government, ending northern domination of politics and economy of Tamil Nadu, opposition to Hindi as India's official language and independence for Dravida Nadu from India. (Dravida Nadu, that is Dravidian Country, consists of today's Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Telengana). In the 1960s DK changed the goal from independent Dravida Nadu to independent Tamil Nadu for lack of any support or enthusiasm outside of Tamil Nadu. DK's offspring DMK also changed its emphasis from Dravida Nadu to Tamil Nadu. Independent Dravida Nadu or independent Tamil Nadu is no longer sought, at least openly, by any Dravidian party. Reason: Indian parliament passed the 16-th amendment to the Indian constitution in 1963 that any political party or person asking for the division of India (for example creation of an independent Tamil Nadu) would not be allowed to contest elections. All other ideals are still intact, at least in paper.

3. Splits, Splits and More Splits

Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) (Dravidian Association) is the parent of all the political and non-political Dravidian parties in Tamil Nadu (parties that have most of the original ideals and goals of DK). Parties that split from DK, and parties that split from them may all be called Dravidian parties. Over the years there were well over a dozen such parties. Some of them vanished after a short time and some still functional and do their best to protect the interest of Tamil Nadu. Some of them contest elections, some of them do not. DK never entered the election arena directly but does support other parties. Many of the smaller parties also do no contest election; some do support other parties; some stand aloof from elections totally.

Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) split from DK in 1949 because a segment of the party headed by C. N. Annadurai did not like the conduct of DK President E.V. Ramaswamy (popularly known as Periyar (The Big Man)). DMK had the same ideals as DK. Soon DMK became larger than DK in membership and popular support. All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) split from DMK in October 1972, again because personal differences between DMK General-Secretary M. Karunanidhi and M. G. Ramachandran. AIADMK professed the same ideals of DMK. [As stated in the previous section, DMK had openly dropped its demand for independence for Dravida

Nadu or Tamil Nadu in 1963 because of the 16-th amendment to the Indian Constitution that prohibits parties and individuals demanding independence for a state or region from contesting state or parliamentary elections. So Independent Tamil Nadu is not a goal of AIADMK, although some members may have that aspiration in their hearts.] Soon AIADMK had comparable strength with DMK. Like DMK, it also contested elections.

There were more splits in DK, DMK, AIADMK and its offshoots. They number over a dozen and we will not list them all here. We will mention one party that split from DMK because it has moderate level of strength but nowhere near to challenge either DMK or AIADMK in the election arena. That party is Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK); MDMK split from DMK in May 1994. The split is mainly because of personal differences between DMK leader M. Karunanidhi and Vaiko. DMK and MDMK have almost identical ideals. Unable to successfully challenge DMK or AIADMK in elections, it has allied with DMK or AIADMK or some third front in elections. Often it wins some seats to the state legislative assembly and Indian parliament.

4. Other "Dravidian" Parties

In the group "Other Dravidian Parties" we include all parties that are not offsprings of any of the parties that split from DK or its offsprings or their offsprings but have the same or similar ideals as DK. They may or may not have the word "Dravida" in their name. There are many such parties. Some are large, some are small. Some contest elections, some do not. None have the strength to successfully challenge DMK or AIADMK in polls; so they ally with DMK or AIADMK or some third front.

We will mention just three such parties/organizations because they are more visible (in the news). They are Paattaali Makkal Katchi (PMK), Viduthalai Chiruththaigal Katchi (VCK) and Naam Tamilar Katchi (NTK). All of them contest elections. PMK had some electoral success (far less than required to form Tamil Nadu State government); VCK also had limited success. NTK is the newest party among them; it had not won any seat for the state assembly or Indian parliament. Unlike PMK and VCK, it never allied with other parties but contested alone.

5. Perunjchiththiranar Movement

Poet Perunjchiththiranar (also known as Pavalareru and Durai Manickam) is unique in the recent history of Tamil Nadu. He did not belong to any party. He was never a member of a Dravidian party but he worked tirelessly for some of the early Dravidian party ideals, especially independence for Tamil Nadu. He was a friend and follower of DK founder Periyar E. V. Ramaswamy. His funeral was attended by many Dravidian party leaders. The then DMK President M. Karunanidhi spoke at the memorial service. The then AIADMK Government under Chief Minister Jayalalithaa passed a condolence resolution in the state legislative assembly.

He published three Tamil magazines - Thenmozhi, Tamil Nilam and Tamil Chittu. He had also spoken at many public meetings. This created a dedicated following and that may be considered the " Perunjchiththiranar Movement". His death in 1955 ended that "movement" as such. His legacy is that he created many Tamil Nationalists among the youth and some of them were or are in senior positions in Tamil Nadu politics.

6. To Contest Elections or Not?

A party/organization can serve the interests of Tamil Nadu with or without contesting elections. In fact, DK and early DMK (before entering election politics) had done much to progress Dravidian ideals by spreading the them through writings and public meetings. Dravidian parties had some of the best public speakers and writers. DK and DMK achieved much through public demonstrations in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. Even today there are Tamil-Nadu-centric organizations (call them Dravidian organizations if you want) that have achieved some success in protecting the interests of Tamil Nadu without contesting elections.

In fact, parties that do not contest elections can do, demonstrate or say things that those parties contesting elections. On the other said, parties that enter elections and capture Tamil Nadu state government can implement its policies as long as they do not conflict with Indian government agenda. Indian government has been and will always been dominated by Hindi politicians and Hindi-region-centric parties. So what Tamil Nadu state government can do to protect the interest of Tamil Nadu from Hindi politicians is limited.

Another aspect that complicates election politics in Tamil Nadu is the alliance of Dravidian parties (Tamil-Nadu-centric parties) with Hindi-region-centric parties such as Congress and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Tamil-Nadu-centric parties and Hindi-region-centric parties have opposite goals and agenda.

Dravidian parties (Tamil-Nadu-centric parties) performance in the election arena, some unholy election alliances and what future holds for Dravidian parties are discussed in "Part II: Elections and Alliances and the End?" of this article.

[First Published: November 2016]

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2.
Dravidian Parties of Tamil Nadu (Tamil-Nadu-Centric Parties)
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11. End of Dravidian Party Rule (Tamil-Nadu-centric Party Rule) in Tami Nadu?

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Dravidian Parties (Dravida Parties) had the original goal of social reforms and protection of South India (the Dravidian states) from North Indian exploitation. However these parties found no support outside of Tamil Nadu. So they concentrate on social reforms in Tamil Nadu and protection of the interests of Tamil Nadu from North Indian exploitation. So a more meaningful name for these parties is "Tamil-Nadu-centric parties" or "TN-centric parties".

7. DMK Contests Elections

DK never contested in elections. DMK wetted its feet in politics by contesting election in 1957. In just 10 years, in the 1967 elections, it won a landslide victory and swept aside the ruling Congress Party. Congress has not recovered from that blow yet (as of 2016). Many attribute DMK's smashing victory and Congress Party's pathetic performance to the brutal manner the Congress Governments at the Centre and Madras State (now called Tamil Nadu) put down the 1965 Tamil Nadu Students Anti-Hindi Imposition Agitation in which over 60 unarmed Tamil youth were shot and killed.

8. Multiple Dravidian Parties in the Election Arena

AIADMK split from DMK in 1972 and became a worthy rival to DMK. They started contesting elections against each other. AIADMK contested the elections the very first time in 1977 and won the state assembly, defeating its parent DMK. Other Dravidian parties like PMK, MDMK, VCK and NTK also contest elections. NTK contests elections alone (not part of any alliance). MDMK, PMK and VCK usually contest in alliance with one or more of DMK, AIADMK, Congress, BJP or others. They switch alliances often.

I have no concern about the two dominant Dravidian parties (Tamil-Nadu-centric parties or TN-centric parties) DMK and AIADMK fighting each other in elections. Voters dissatisfied with DMK for one reason or other can vote for AIADMK instead of having to vote for a Hindi-region-centric party like Congress or Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Similarly those disenchanted with AIADMK could vote for DMK.

But an untoward political equation developed in Tamil Nadu. Although the Hindi-region-centric parties (Congress Party and BJP) have very little voter base in Tamil Nadu, DMK and AIADMK started to ally with one or the other; AIADMK, under Jayalalithaa, did shun both parties for the past few years and that is good news, but Karunanidhi's DMK has currently alliance with Congress party. Other Dravidian Parties like MDMK, PMK and VCK have also allied with Hindi-region-centric Congress and BJP one time or other.

Congress and BJP have very little support base in Tami Nadu. It is doubtful if they could win a single parliamentary or state legislative assembly seat in Tamil Nadu if they contest on their own. It is DMK, AIADMK, PMK, MDMK and VCK that are providing sustenance to Congress and BJP by allying with them. I want to point out that on issues like language policy, devolution of power to states and central government tax distribution to states, Congress and BJP have almost the same view and Tamil Nadu parties have diametrically opposite views.

9. Hindi-Region-Centric Parties

We consider Congress and BJP as Hindi-Region-Centric Parties; by Hindi-centric parties or Hindi-region-centric parties, we mean not just pro-Hindi imposition, we mean they primarily work for the benefit of Hindi people and Hindi states by discriminating against non-Hindi peoples and states. In that context, both Congress and BJP are the same; their

actions are almost identical. There is more and more Hindi imposition every year irrespective of whether Congress or BJP or some alliance rules the Central Government. Both Congress and BJP try to accumulate more and power at the central government and reduce the power of state governments (negative devolution). Don't read their election manifestos or what they say at election rallies in non-Hindi states, observe what they do when in power at the central government. While visiting Tamil Nadu, Congress and BJP leaders praise Tamil language and culture, then they go back to New Delhi and push aside Tamil from Indian government offices in Tamil Nadu. Will they promise that only Tamil-knowing employees would be posted in Indian government offices in Tamil Nadu? No, they will not. Their praises of Tamil are empty.

They say one thing in Tamil Nadu and do the opposite from New Delhi. Both Congress and BJP have their base in Hindi states and they always act to benefit Hindi states. Large amounts of tax monies are transferred from Tamil Nadu and other southern states every year irrespective of whether Congress or BJP rules India. Here is some data to think about. **For every 100 Rupees Indian government collects in taxes from Tamil Nadu, only 40 Rupees is given back to Tamil Nadu in the form of financial grants, central government projects, etc. At the same time for every 100 Rupees Indian government collects in taxes from the Hindi state Uttar Pradesh, 176 Rupees is given to Uttar Pradesh in the form of financial grants, central government projects, etc.** Other South Indian states also are economically discriminated similarly [Reference 1]. This money transfer from southern states to Hindi states happens under both Congress rule and BJP rule.

10. What is Wrong About Dravidian Parties' Alliance with Hindi-Region-Centric Parties?

As we discussed earlier, Dravidian parties are Tamil-Nadu-centric parties while Congress and BJP are Hindi-region-centric parties. Tamil-Nadu-centric parties' agendas, goals and policies are opposite to those of Hindi-region-centric parties. Dravidian parties work for the betterment of Tamil Nadu first. Hindi-region-centric parties work for the benefit of Hindi region and in that process impose their language (Hindi) and transfer large amounts of tax monies from many non-Hindi states to Hindi states (as illustrate in the previous section). How can two groups of parties with so diametrically opposite goals ally?

Congress and BJP would have perished as viable political forces in Tamil Nadu but for their alliance with Dravidian parties. Congress and BJP bring only a small fraction of votes to the alliances in Tamil Nadu. That is one reason why AIADMK's Jayalalithaa ended the alliance with the Hindi-region-centric parties. One reason why DMK is now allied with Congress is that it fears Congress would ally with AIADMK and may add some votes to AIADMK alliance. Same reason why AIADMK used to ally with Congress or BJP. Another reason is that alliance with Congress or BJP gets Dravidian parties minister positions in the central government. Such cabinet positions may benefit those ministers and may be the party, but our experience is that Tamil Nadu gets no benefit or very little benefit from these alliances.

Long time ago, in 1962, when Congress was in power at centre, DMK founder C. N. Annadurai said, "Southern India is discriminated in industrial development. No new iron plant; no new rail line; no petroleum refinery. No noteworthy industrial plant is allocated to southern India. Instead of building an iron plant, the ministry of heavy industries is given to a south Indian. Is it political skill?" (from C. N. Annadurai's maiden speech at the Upper House of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) in 1962). Hindi-region-centric parties give minister positions to their Tamil-Nadu-centric party allies but not much benefits to Tamil Nadu.

Plunder of Tamil Nadu by way of transferring large amounts of tax monies from Tamil Nadu to Hindi states continues irrespective of Congress rules or BJP rules at the centre. This transfer of tax monies started in the 1950s and continues to the present. We cannot stop it because Hindi-region-centric parties will always wield power at the central government.

11. A Third Alliance

Currently the two powerful alliances in Tamil Nadu are headed by DMK and AIADMK. There have been attempts to create a third alliance to compete against those two alliances. That is all right as long as Hindi-region-centric parties like Congress and BJP are not included in them. If allowed in a third alliance, Congress or BJP would wield sufficient influence to get minister positions. Soon Congress or BJP would demand Deputy Chief Minister position and then Chief Minister position of Tamil Nadu. That would be the end of Dravidian party rule over Tamil Nadu. Any third alliance that includes Congress or BJP coming to power in Tamil Nadu would be the end of Dravidian party rule in Tamil Nadu.

11. End of Dravidian Party Rule (Tamil-Nadu-centric Party Rule) in Tami Nadu?

As of now, 2016, DMK and AIADMK still dominate Tamil Nadu politics. There seems to be no one to dislodge them. Our fear is not that these parties would be voted out suddenly and Congress or BJP would be voted in to govern Tamil Nadu. Our concern is slow attrition. All these parties, Tamil-Nadu-centric or Hindi-region-centric parties form and participate in alliances to increase their voter base and eventually rule Tamil Nadu. We are not concerned if PMK, MDMK, VCK, NTK or some other Tamil-Nadu-centric party were to govern Tamil Nadu alone or in alliance with other Tamil-Nadu-centric parties. What we are afraid is Congress or BJP become part of the Tamil Nadu government on its own or in alliance with a Dravidian party.

Congress and BJP are waiting for a chance to get a minister position in Tamil Nadu, then ask for Deputy Chief Minister, then move on to get Chief Minister position itself with indirect or direct pressure from Central government. It has happened in some non-Hindi states. Even in Tamil Nadu, Congress had stabbed its ally when it saw weakness.

Year 1987. Congress was allied with AIADMK. AIADMK leader M. G. Ramachandran died and the party split into two factions, one under Mrs. Janakai Ramachandran and

another under Propaganda Secretary Jayalalithaa. Neither faction had a majority in the legislative assembly. Congress promised to support the Janaki faction, giving it the majority to form the state government and continue the AIADMK rule. But it withdrew its support on the day of the legislative assembly vote. So neither AIADMK faction could form state government. New election was called. Congress contested on its own but could not win enough seats to form state government. It shows the treacherous nature of Congress. Tamil-Nadu-centric parties should learn from history. Do not ally with Congress or BJP. If you have to ally, do not give more seats than their strength in the state warrants.

As long as strong leaders like Karunanidhi (DMK), late M. G. Ramachandran (AIADMK) and Jayalalthaa (AIADMK) headed DMK and AIADMK, they were able to keep Congress and BJP out of minister positions. They were offered limited number of seats (although, unfortunately, more than their party strength in Tamil Nadu warrants). DMK and AIADMK never offered minister positions to these parties.

Congress and BJP **should never be offered minister positions in Tamil Nadu**. They will use that as a vehicle to implement their agenda in Tamil Nadu. We see that in some other states where BJP got minister positions. It should never happen in Tamil Nadu. With minister positions in hand, Congress and BJP would increase their political base and eventually stab the Dravidian allies in the back and would attempt to take power in Tamil Nadu, as it happened after the death of M. G. Ramachandran. That would be the end of Dravidian parties rule over Tamil Nadu.

Do **not ally with Hindi-region-centric parties like Congress and BJP**, as Chief Minister Jayalalithaa is doing now. If not, allocate them limited number of seats commensurate with their strength in the state (proportional to the number of votes they got in the previous election). Under no circumstance, I repeat, under no circumstance, offer these parties minister or deputy minister positions in the state. We want Tamil Nadu parties (DMK, AIADMK, MDMK, PMK, VCK, NTP) to rule Tamil Nadu.

Tamil Nadu voters can do their share by **not voting for Hindi-region-centric parties even if they are allied with their favourite Dravidian party**. Vote for some Tamil-Nadu-centric party in that constituency. Tamil Nadu State should never again be ruled by Hindi-region-centric parties. Tamil Nadu should be ruled by Tamil-Nadu-centric parties (Dravidian Parties). Indian government will always be controlled by Hindi region politicians. There is nothing Tamil Nadu can do about it.

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3.
DMK and Dravida Nadu (or Tamil Nadu) Independence

Thanjai Nalankilli

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ABBREVIATIONS

DK - Dravidar Kazhagam
DMK - Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam

Foreword

This article is not about whether Tamil Nadu should seek independence from India or not. This is about the history of Dravida Munnetra Kazhgam (DMK); its role in the Tamil Nadu independence movement, how it spread this ideology around TamilNadu, and ultimately abandoned it publicly when the Indian Government threatened to ban it as a political party, although at least one leader secretly sought foreign help a few years later. This is a history Tamil people should know, whether they are for or against Tamil Nadu independence.

1. Introduction

Tamil Nadu Independence Movement and aspirations of Tamil people for independence from Indian rule predates the formation of Dravida Munneta Kazagam (DMK), in fact it predates the formation of its parent party Dravidar Kazahagam (DK). However, from the

early days of the Tamil Nadu Independence Movement, you will see in the forefront leaders who would later found DK and DMK.

2. Lost Sovereignty of the Tamil Nation

Tamil people lost their sovereignty with the fall of the last standing Tamil royal dynasty, the Pandya Dynasty, around 1311. The three major kingdoms of Chera Nadu, Chola Nadu and Pandya Nadu ceased to exist, and a succession of outsiders, namely, the Sultans, the Nayaks, Maharashtrians and the Nawabs, ruled Tamil Nadu in fragments for some time. Then came the Europeans; all of Tamil Nadu, with the exception of Pondycherry, fell under British colonial rule. (Pondychery was ruled by the French.) British integrated all the conquered nations of the Indian subcontinent into a single administrative unit and formed the "British India". **This was the first time something like India existed, under any name, in all history.** When the British decided to leave the subcontinent in 1947, they intended to leave it as a single country, at the suggestion of the Congress Party. Muslims of the northwest and northeast objected to it vocally and violently and the British rulers divided the subcontinent into two countries, India and Pakistan. Though there were voices of objection from Tamil Nadu, these voices were feeble and their actions not forceful that the British turned a deaf ear to them. Tamil Nadu became a part of the Hindi dominated India. This is the story of how Tamil Nadu became part of post-British India.

3. Early Calls for Tamil Nadu Independence

T. P. Vedachalam of the **Justice Party (Neethi Katchi)** founded Tamil Nation Liberation Association (Tamil Desa Viduthalai Sangam) in Thiruchirapalli (Thiruchi, Trichi) in August 1938. The Association held a few meetings around Tamil Nadu and then ceased its operations because the cause was adopted by a larger organization, the Justice Party. Tamil Nation Liberation Association has a special place in history as the first Tamil Nadu Independence Movement of the 20-th Century.

E. V. Ramaswamy (**Periyar E.V.R.**) of the Self-Respect Movement, addressing a meeting in Salem on October 1938, said that, "the best way to preserve the liberty of Tamils is to agitate for separation from the rest of India and the proposed All-India Federation, just as Ceylon and Burma had chosen to stand aloof from India". E. V. Ramaswamy (Periyar E.V.R.) became the leader of the Justice Party. He said that the separation of Tamil Nadu from the rest of the Indian Subcontinent would be the principal demand of the Party. NOTE: Justice Party (Neethi Katchi) transformed into Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) in 1944.

Tamil patriots organized "Tamil Nadu for Tamils" meetings throughout Tamil Nadu on December 10, 1939 to explain to the public the need for Tamil Nadu independence. C. N. Annadurai (Arinjar Anna), who would found the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) ten years later was the principal speaker on that day. He was an excellent orator and he enunciated the need for independent Tamil Nadu very clearly.

The Provincial Tamilar Conference held in Vellore on December 27, 1939 discussed Tamil Nadu independence and resolved to work for it.

The Justice Party State Conference in Thiruvarur on August 24, 1940 passed a resolution that, in order to protect Dravidian culture, arts and economy, the Dravidian homeland of Madras Province should be separated from the rest of the Indian Subcontinent and ruled as a separate unit (until the British leave the subcontinent, at which time the Madras Province would become an independent country). Thus what started as Tamil Nadu Independence Movement morphed into Dravida Nadu Independence Movement. We will discuss this transformation further in Section 12 (NOTE: We have discussed here only a few key events of pre-DMK years, as the emphasis of this article is on "DMK and the Tamil Nadu Independence Movement". A more detailed discussion of the history of Tamil Nadu independence struggle may be given in another article at a later date.)

4. Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) and Tamil Nadu Independence

The Justice Party became Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) in 1944, under the leadership of Periyar EVR. At a Dravidar Kazhagam Conference in Thiruchirapalli (Thiruchi, Trichi) in 1945, C. N. Annadurai elaborated the arguments for independent Dravida Nadu. Here are a few excerpts from his lengthy speech:

"India is a continent and it should be divided into separate nations (countries). There is no need for it to be under a single government."

"India should be divided according to racial lines to prevent future bloodsheds."

"Aryan dominance grows under a single Indian country. Other races are destroyed."

"Dividing India into separate countries would allow for each to develop its economy according to its circumstances and prevent one region taking the wealth of another."

Dravida Nadu Separation Conference was held in Cuddalore on October 14, 1947. The famed Tamil scholar and former Congress leader V. Kalyana Sundaram (Thiru Vee Kaa) gave a long speech about the Aryan-Dravidian problem. A resolution that Dravida Nadu should become an independent country was passed.

V. Kalyana Sundaram (Thiru Vee Kaa) unveiled a map of Dravida Nadu at the Erode Dravidar Kazhagam Conference.

(NOTE: We will not discuss more about DK because this article is about DMK's role in Tamil Nadu Independence Movement. A more detailed discussion of the history of Tamil Nadu independence struggle may be given in another article at a later date.)

5. Birth of Dravida Munnertra Kazhagam (DMK) and Tamil Nadu Independence

C. N. Annadurai, or Arinjar Anna as he was popularly known, split from Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) and founded Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam on September 17, 1949. Many other DK leaders joined with him. Reason for the split was not ideological but personal grievances against the DK leader Periyar E. V. Ramaswamy. Annadurai stated that DMK would work for the independence of Dravida Nadu. In fact, for many years, DMK observed the day of its founding, September 17, as "Dravida Nadu Liberation Day", with meetings organized around Tamil Nadu. Annadurai stated that DK and DMK are like a two-barrel gun, fighting for Dravida Nadu freedom.

6. DMK Meetings and Conferences on Dravida Nadu Independence

Madras State DMK Students Conference in Madras (Chennai) on November 8, 1950 passed a resolution calling for the independence of Drvida Nadu.

DMK State Conference was held on December 13-16, 1951. As Annadurai raised the party flag there were shouts of "Dravida Nadu for Dravidians" from the audience. Later Annadurai and other DMK leaders spoke about the need for independent Dravida Nadu.

DMK leaders spoke of the need for independent Dravida Nadu during the 1952, 1957 and 1962 election campaigns. DMK did not field candidates in the 1952 general election but supported independent and other party candidates. More about these elections later.

DMK held its Third General Conference on July 13-16, 1961 in Madurai suburb of Thiruparankundram (Thiruparangkundram). There were loud shouts of "Dravida Nadu for Dravidians" when party General-Secretary C. N. Annadurai hoisted the party flag on the first day. Such shouts were heard from party cadres throughout the four-day conference. There were plenty of references to independent Dravida Nadu in the speeches made by party leaders. In his concluding speech on the fourth day, Annadurai urged everyone to work hard for "our independence".

DMK held its Special Election Conference in the textile city Coimbatore (Kovai) on December 16 and 17, 1961, in preparation for the forthcoming 1962 general election. Shouts of "Dravida Nadu for Dravidians" were heard throughout this two-day event and all the speakers touched on the need for independent Dravida Nadu.

Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) celebrated "Dravida Nadu Independence Festival" (Dravida Nadu Viduthalai Vizaa) in Chennai (Madras) on September 22, 1962. Over 200,000 people participated in the procession organized as part of that festival. Over 300,000 people attended the meeting. But, alas, DMK abandoned its independence demand on November 13, 1963 when the Indian Government threatened to ban the party from contesting elections if it did not abandon its independence demand!

(NOTE: The above are some key meetings and conferences in which independence demand was raised. Not one DMK meeting or conference went by between 1949 and 1962 without a speaker raising the demand for independent Dravida Nadu.)

7. 1952 Election and Independence Demand

DMK decided not to field candidates in the 1952 general election. At the DMK General Council Meeting in Madurai on November 17, 1951, a resolution was passed that DMK would support other party candidates and independent candidates who sign a pledge that they would support independence for Dravida Nadu. Initially DMK planned to support Communist Party candidates but then it withdrew the support because the Communist Party refused to sign the pledge. DMK did support 45 independent candidates who signed he pledge and over half of them won the election to the State Legislative Assembly. One such successful independent candidate was Mr. Suyamprakasam. He and 20 others who won with DMK support formed the Dravidian Parliamentary Party and functioned as a unit. With only about 20 members it could not do much.

8. 1957 Election and Independence Demand

Dravida Munnetra Kazhagm (DMK) General Council decided on December 29, 1956 to field candidates in the 1957 general election. It contested on an election platform that included demand for independent Drvida Nadu. DMK won 15 seats to the State Legislative Assembly and 2 seats to the Indian Parliament.

9. 1962 Election and Independence Demand

Dravida Munnetra Kazhagm (DMK) held its Election Special Conference in Coimbatore on December 16-17, 1961. DMK leaders spoke of the need for independence from India. Shouts of "Dravida Nadu for Dravidians" were heard all through the conference. DMK's election platform included its demand for independence from India. In the 1962 election, held between February 17 and 24, DMK more than tripled its seats, winning 50 seats to the State Legislative Assembly and 7 seats to the Indian Parliament.

10. Thiruchengodu Bye-Election of 1962 and Independence Demand

Because the Member of Parliament (MP) from Thiruchengodu, Dr. Subbarayan of Congress Party, resigned to take up another appointment, a bye-election was held there on August 11, 1962. Congress Party and DMK contested in a one on one election (that is, only two candidates). Top Congress leaders including many ministers who came to campaign for the Congress candidate told at election rallies that DMK was a separatist party (that is, it demanded independence from India) and so people should not vote for it. As a stunning rebuke, people voted for DMK and the DMK candidate won. DMK leaders claimed that it was a "**victory for separatism (independence)**".

11. Independence Demand in Annadurai's Parliamentary Speeches

DMK founder and General-Secretary, C. N. Annadurai, was elected to the upper house of Indian parliament (Rajya Sabha) in 1962. In his maiden speech on May 1, 1962, Annadurai reiterated DMK's demand for independence for Dravida Nadu. He said,

"Dravidians demand the right of self determination . . . We want a separate country for southern India."

Speaking about his maiden speech at parliament, Annadurai said at a public meeting in Chennai (Madras), "I am steadfast in the Dravida Nadu demand I spoke of in the upper house of parliament."

At another time, commenting on a statement made by the President of India Dr. Radhakrishnan, Annadurai said, "You say that India is one country because Raman and Krishnan are worshipped from Kanyakumari to Himalayas. Jesus is worshipped throughout Europe, yet there are many countries in Europe."

12. Dravida Nadu or Tamil Nadu?

Why did DK and DMK talk about independent Dravida Nadu, and not independent Tamil Nadu? Actually the original demand in 1938 was for independent Tamil Nadu (see Section 3). Within two years it metamorphosed into a demand for independent Dravida Nadu (see Section 3). Why this change?

Tamil Nadu, at that time, was part of the Madras Province. This province consisted of much of Tamil Nadu and parts of Andhra Pradesh (Telugu speakers), Karnataka (Kannada speakers) and Kerala (Malayalam speakers). Tamil Nadu was the major component of this province. While the Madras Province was ruled directly by the British, the rest of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala were ruled by kings who were "subservient" to the British. Goal of the Dravida Nadu proponents was that the entire Madras Province should be separated from the rest of British colonial possessions in the Indian Subcontinent and the British should rule it separately from the rest of the subcontinent until the British colonial rule ends. Then, when the British leave the subcontinent, Madras Province would become an independent nation as it happened to Burma (Myanmar) and Ceylon (Sri Lanka), which were ruled separately from the subcontinent. This independent nation is called "Dravida Nadu" which consisted of mostly Tamil Nadu and parts of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala. It was hoped that the rest of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala under the rule of kings would join the Dravida Nadu (in the same way all the kingdoms joined either India or Pakistan after the British left). That Dravida Nadu concept made sense at that time.

Proponents of the above strategy, however, did not do much to convince or pressure the British to separate Madras Province from the rest of the subcontinent. When the British left the subcontinent in 1947, Madras Province (renamed Madras State) became part of India. India was reorganized into linguistic states in the mid-1950s and the Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam areas of the Madras State went to Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala, respectively. Since there was very little interest in a Dravida Nadu in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala, and there was considerable interest in independence from India in Tamil Nadu, it no longer made sense to demand independent Dravida Nadu. DK and DMK should have reverted to the original demand of 1938, namely, demand for independent Tamil Nadu.

Some years later Dravida Kazhagam (DK) did revert to "independence for Tamil Nadu". Its official publication Viduthalai (means "independence") changed the text in its front-page logo from "Dravida Nadu for Dravidians" to "Tamil Nadu for Tamilians". Dravida Munnetra Kazhagm DMK) did not make such a change; it continued with the Dravida Nadu demand although that demand no longer made sense. A founding member of DMK, Mr. T. M. Parthasarathy, explained DMK's position thus in his Tamil book Thee Mu Ka Varalaru (History of DMK), (Fourth Edition, 1984): "The four Dravidian states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala should get independence separately and the four should should join on racial lines (Dravidian race) to form a Dravidian Federal Union" This explanation does make some sense. It implies that all four Dravidian states need not fight together and get independence together. Each may get independence separately on its own phase. As they get independence the four would form the Dravidian Federal Union. In other words, Tamil Nadu would fight its own independence battle and achieve independence. When and if the other three Dravidian states become free, a Dravidian Federal Union would be formed. Whatever was DMK's goal, it did very little to achieve it except for talking about it ad infinitum at public meetings. This raises the question, "Were DMK leaders committed to fighting for an independent Dravida Nadu or Tamil Nadu?" We will have an unexpected answer later. Now, let us see things progress.

13.DMK Gave Up independence Demand in 1963

Indian Parliament passed the 16-th Amendment to the Indian constitution in 1963. It prohibits persons and parties who advocate secession of a region or state (that is, advocate independence of a region or state from India) from contesting elections. Many thought that the primary target was DMK's "separatist activities". M.S. Gurupada Swamy, a member of the parliament, said, "The immediate provocation or the immediate cause for the Bill is obviously the activities of the DMK". Law Minister A.K. Sen denied that the amendment was targeting DMK only, and cited separatism in Nagaland and Punjab. (The Hindu Businessline; October 27, 2017)

DMK opposed the amendment in parliament but the amendment was voted successfully. DMK had a choice; give up the Dravida Nadu independence demand or stop contesting elections. On November 3, 1963, the DMK Central Committee voted unanimously to drop its demand for independent Dravida Nadu, in view of the 16-th Amendment to the Indian Constitution.

14. Karunanidhi Speaks in 2015

A little over three years before his death at age 94, former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and the then DMK President Muthuvel Karunanidhi made an important statement. Speaking at the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) general council meeting on January 9, 2015, he said, “even if Tamil Nadu for Tamils is not realized and Tamil Nadu could not be attained in the immediate future, we should have the determination to protect the Tamil language, Tamils and the party.” (The New Indian Express; January 10, 2015). This brief statement speaks volumes.

A government may prevent people from certain action through laws and constitutions but cannot change what is in one's mind. Karunanidhi did stop publicly advocating independent Tamil Nadu from 1963 after Indian parliament amended the constitution prohibiting parties and people advocating "separatism" from contesting elections, but it would seem that his yearning for freedom was in the heart to the end.

15. Request for American Help in 1975

Did DMK really give up independence demand? DMK came to power in the state in 1967. A minister in the DMK government, Rajaram, approached the American Consulate in Chennai in 1975 and asked if America would support Tamil Nadu independence. The Consular official said "No". It is not clear who else in DMK supported Rajaram's request to America but at least one DMK leader, at the level of minister, made a serious effort towards Tamil Nadu independence 12 years after DMK officially gave up independence demand. More details in Chapter 3.

16. DMK Leaders' Commitment to Tamil Nadu Independence?

Writings and speeches of Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) leaders in the 1940's, 1950's and early 1960s clearly enunciated the need for Tamil Nadu independence (although they called it Dravida Nadu independence). Most party members of those years supported the independence demand and expected to achieve it. Most party leaders and cadres **saw it in their heart--the glory days of the historic Tamil Nadu coming back alive in modern Tamil Nadu**.

Then, in 1963, came the 16-th amendment to the Indian constitution that prevented those who seek independence for any region or state from contesting parliamentary and state legislative assembly elections. DMK leadership decided to drop the independence demand and never again asked for independence, at least in public. DMK General-Secretary Annadurai said in 1963 that they are dropping the independence demand but the reasons for independence still exist and should be rectified.

One DMK leader, K. Rajaram (Minister of Labour, Tamil Nadu State), who never spoke of independence after 1963, approached the American Consulate in Chennai in 1975 and asked in private if America would support Tamil Nadu independence. The Consular official said "No". (see Section 15).

The old guard of DMK is no longer alive or active. Do the new generation of leaders and cadres still hope for independence? No one in DMK has openly demanded independence after November 3, 1963. DMK President Karunanidhi said in 2015, three years before his death, “Even if Tamil Nadu for Tamils is not realized and Tamil Nadu could not be attained in the immediate future, we should have the determination to protect the Tamil language, Tamils and the party.” (The New Indian Express; January 10, 2015).

[First Published: November 2003; Updated February 2019]

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4.
Why DK and DMK initially asked for Independent Dravida Nadu and later moved towards Independent Tamil Nadu

Thanjai Nalankilli

ABBREVIATIONS

DK - Dravidar Kazhagam
DMK - Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam

"Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka and Andhra should each SEPARATELY become independent countries and THEN the four should join to form a 'Dravidian Federation'." - Thee Mu Ka Varalaru (History of DMK) T. M. Parthasarathy, 1984 (T. M. Parthasarathy was a founding member of DMK; the book has an Introduction from Annadurai and Karunanidhi)

A question often asked of me when I speak about the current Tamilnadu Independence Movement is, "why did Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) demand independent Dravida Nadu in its early years and not independent Tamil Nadu?" (Dravida Nadu, as it was contemplated, consisted of the region where Kannadigas, Malayalis, Tamils and Telugus live. These people are of Dravidian origin and spoke the Dravidian languages of Karnataka, Malayalam, Tamil and Telugu. In today's (2005) geographical terms the contemplated Dravida Nadu would encompass the entire Southern India, consisting of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu states.)

To understand the reason why DK and DMK demanded independent Dravidanadu and not independent Tamil Nadu, one has to look into the history of Tamil Nationalist Movement or Tamil National Movement. The earliest call for independence was in fact for Tamil Nadu (and not Dravida Nadu) [Chapter 1].

T. P. Vedachalam of the Justice Party founded Tamil Nation Liberation Association (Tamil Desa Viduthalai Sangam) in Tiruchi in August 1938. The Association held a few meetings around Tamil Nadu and then ceased its operations because the cause was adopted by a larger organization, the Justice Party itself.

Periyar E. V. Ramaswamy (EVR) of DK and C. N Annadurai (Arinjar Anna or CNA) of DMK also initially called for Tamil Nadu independence. Periyar EVR, who at that time headed the Self-Respect Movement, addressing a meeting in Salem on October 1938, said that, "**the best way to preserve the liberty of Tamils is to agitate for separation from the rest of India and the proposed All-India Federation**, just as Ceylon and Burma had chosen to stand aloof from India". He was elected President of the Justice Party in December 1938. He said that the separation of Tamil Nadu from the rest of the Indian Subcontinent would be the principal demand of the Party. Justice Party was reformed and renamed Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) in 1944.

In December 1939, speaking at the "Tamil Nadu for Tamils" Meeting, C. N. Annadurai enunciated the need for independent Tamil Nadu. He would found the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in 1949.

In a speech on December 17, 1939, Periyar EVR raised the slogan "Dravida Nadu for Dravidians", changing the earlier slogan "Tamil Nadu for Tamils". It is at the Justice Party State Conference in Thiruvarur on August 24, 1940 that **Tamil Nadu Independence Movement morphed into Dravida Nadu Independence Movement**. It passed a resolution that, in order to protect Dravidian culture, arts and economy, the Dravidian homeland of Madras Province should be separated from the rest of the Indian Subcontinent and ruled as a separate unit (until the British leave the subcontinent, at which time the Madras Province would become an independent country). Thus what started as Tamil Nadu Independence Movement morphed into Dravida Nadu Independence Movement. At that time both Periyar E. V. Ramaswamy and C. N Annadurai were Justice Party members.

One reason for Justice Party's call for independent Dravida Nadu (instead of independent Tamil Nadu) could be the influence of Telugu leaders in the Justice Party at that time (Telugus are not Tamils but Dravidians). The top rung Telugu leaders in the Justice Party included A. C. Parthasarathy Naidu, Ragavaiah Naidu, K. V. Reddy Naidu and A. Subbarayalu Reddy. Another non-Tamil leader of the Justice Party was T. M. Nair (a Malayali); he strived very hard for Dravida Nadu independence. These leaders worked well with Tamil leaders of the party like Periyar EVR and Annadurai, and developed a strong bond. Thus what started as Tamilnadu independence movement changed to Dravidanadu independence movement. While the Telugu leaders in the Justice Party aspired for independent Dravida Nadu, there was very little support among the Telugu population. Neither was much support, if any, among the Malayali and Kannadiga population. In contrast, there was substantial active support for a separate country from India among the Tamil population (by no means it was a majority but the support was vocal, active and in substantial numbers).

After the renaming of Justice Party to Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) in 1944, almost all speeches and writings about Dravida Nadu independence were in Tamil with a sprinkling of English articles. Almost all public meetings and conferences about independent Dravida Nadu were held in Tamil areas. By now it was clear that the push would be for independent Tami Nadu with the concept of a federal Dravida Nadu, consisting of autonomous Andhra, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, put in the backburner. This is very clearly stated in the Tamil book "Thee Mu Ka Varalaru (History of DMK) T. M. Parthasarathy:

"Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka and Andhra should each SEPARATELY become independent countries and THEN the four should join to form a 'Dravidian Federation'."

Thus DMK's position was to strive for an independent Tamil Nadu (Tamil Country) with the eventual creation of a Dravidian Federation called "Dravida Nau" (Dravidian

Country) if and when people of Andhra, Karnataka and Kerala fight for and get independence. DMK abandoned its "independence for Dravida Nadu (or independent Tamil Nadu)" demand in 1963 immediately after the Indian Parliament passed the Sixteenth Amendment to the Indian Constitution that prohibited those who advocate separatism from running for public offices (such as Indian parliament and state legislative assembly) [Chapter 4].

Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) changed its demand for independent Dravida Nadu to independent Tamil Nadu in the 1960s. Party President Periyar E. V. Ramaswamy changed the banner in his Tamil magazine Viduthalai from "Dravida Nadu for Dravidians" to "Tamil Nadu for Tamils". Periyar never gave up his demand for independence although he did not enter into any type of agitation for it after the 1950s; he was concentrating on social reforms in Tamil Nadu. According to Tamil Nationalist Poet Pavalareru Perunjchththiranar, Periyar told him just a few months before his death that he would start an agitation for Tamilnadu independence soon. Periyar passed away in 1973 before starting such an agitation.

Thus what started initially as Tamil Nadu independence took a turn to Dravida Nadu independence and then took a turn back to Tamil Nadu independence because there was very little, if any, support in Andhra Pradesh (Telugu), Karnataka (Kannada) and Kerala (Malayalam).

[First Published: May 2005]

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5.
Debunking False Information on When and Why DMK Dropped the Dravida Nadu Independence Demand

Thanjai Nalankilli

OUTLINE

1. Introduction
2. The Facts
3. Some of the False Information and Our Rebuttal
4. Wikipedia Article
5. Concluding Remarks

1. Introduction

Purpose of this article is to debunk/correct some false information floating around on the Internet about when and why Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) dropped its "independent Dravida Nadu or independent Tamil Nadu (separate from India)".

2. The Facts

We went to one of the most authentic sources for the History of DMK: The Tamil book "Thee Mu Ka Varalaru" (History of DMK) by T. M. Parthasarathy, Bharathi Nilayam, Chennai, 1984 (Fourth Edition)." Mr. T. M. Parthasarathy was a founding DMK leader. The book has foreword/introduction by some of the top DMK leaders C. N. Annadurai M. Karunanidhi, K. A. Mthiazhagan, K. Anbazhagan and R. Arangannal. These are some of the influential people who made DMK history in those early years. Annadurai, Karunanidhi and Anbazhagan had served as General Secretaries of DMK at different times. So you can rely on facts presented in that book. We will call this book Reference 1 in the rest of the article.

When and why did DMK drop its independent Dravida Nadu demand? **Both questions are answered in Reference 1**:

After the Indian parliament passed the 16-th constitutional amendment, DMK General secretary C. N. Annadurai returned from New Delhi to Tamil Nadu, met with senior leaders one by one and in groups to explain the provisions of the constitutional amendment and got their views on what to do. Then the DMK Central Committee (Maththiya Seyarkuzu) met on November 3, 1963 at the DMK Office in Royapuram. Mr. Nedunchezian presided. The central committee voted unanimously to drop its demand for independent Dravida Nadu. [Reference 1; Fourth Edition p. 367 and 368].

What is this constitutional amendment? The Constitution (Sixteenth Amendment) Act, 1963 (5-th October 1963). This amendment requires that anyone contesting for

parliament or state legislative assembly must take an oath that he/she would uphold the "sovereignty and integrity of India." By swearing that they would uphold the "integrity of India", they are swearing that they would not try to carve out a separate country (for example, Dravida Nadu or Tamil Nadu or whatever region) from India. This prevents anyone working for an independent Dravida Nadu from contesting in parliament or legislative assembly elections. Such a requirement does not exist in other **multi-ethnic democracies like Canada or United Kingdom (UK)**. People seeking independence for French speaking Quebec Province of Canada or Scottish speaking Scotland of UK can and do contest elections. Such a possibility is prevented by the Sixteenth Amendment to the Indian Constitution. DMK members could not contest elections unless DMK dropped its independent Dravida Nadu demand.

DMK had the choice: drop the Dravida Nadu demand and continue to contest elections or keep the Dravida Nadu demand alive and keep out of elections. We are not privy to the discussions within the central committee but, as discussed in Section 2 of this article, DMK Central Committee (Maththiya Seyarkuzu) voted unanimously to drop its demand for independent Dravida Nadu on November 3, 1963, about a month after the 16-th amendment to the Indian constitution was enacted on 5-th October 1963.

We have established in this section why and when DMK dropped its independent Dravida Nadu demand from a reliable source Reference 1. If you hear or read anything else as to when and why DMK dropped its Dravida Nadu demand, that is false. Educate them and provide the correct information.

3. Some of the False Information and Our Rebuttal

There are people who want to downplay Tamil Nationalism and Dravida Nadu (or Tamil Nadu) independence aspirations. So they spread the false information that DMK did not drop its demand for independence because the 16-th amendment to the Indian constitution but because DMK leaders realized that there is no need for independence and had change of heart. In order to say that, they have to say that DMK dropped its demand before the amendment was enacted on October 5, 1963. That is the reason why some people spread the false information that DMK dropped the independence demand before this date. There are others who read this false information, believe it and repost it on the Internet. **The truth is DMK dropped the demand on November 3, 1963; four weeks AFTER the 16-th amendment was enacted** [See section 2 above for details]. Sixteenth amendment to the Indian constitution was commonly known in Tamil Nadu as "pirivinai thadai sattam" (Anti-Secessionist Law)

4. Wikipedia Article (as seen on August 5, 2019)

4.1)
A statement in www.wikipedia.org particularly concerns us because it is a very popular website and many people go to this site expecting correct information. Unfortunately someone has included incorrect information in wikipedia article on Dravida Nadu.

The following statement is near the very top of the wikipedia article "Dravida Nadu", in the third paragraph: "In 1960, the DMK leaders decided to delete the demand of Dravida Nadu from the party programme at a meeting held in the absence of Annadurai. In 1963, the Government of India led by Jawaharlal Nehru, declared secessionism as an illegal act. As a consequence, Annadurai abandoned the "claim" for Dravida Nadu – now geographically limited to modern Tamil Nadu – completely in 1963." [Reference 2; this is the wikipedia page as it existed on August 5, 2019 and archived by Internet Archive on that date.]

4.2)
That statement is incorrect. In the opinion of this writer, it is carefully worded incorrect information. It misleads people that DMK leaders other than Annadurai decided to delete the demand of Dravida Nadu from the party programme at a 1960 meeting held in the absence of Annadurai. What is the reference for this statement? Most of the other statements in this Wikipedia article are referenced. There are 58 references listed in this article but no reference listed for this important statement. Why? **Because there is no reference. It is just made up to mislead readers.** Also, it does not provide the date or location of the supposed meeting where DMK leaders decided to delete the demand of Dravida Nadu from the party programme. If a date or location is given, we could easily check if such a meeting took place and decision to drop the Dravida Nadu demand was made? Because no date or location is given, I searched DMK records of meetings in not only 1960 but also 1961 and 1962. There is no record of DMK leaders deciding to delete the demand of Dravida Nadu from the party programme. The only resolution dropping Dravida Nadu independence was made on November 3, 1963.

What are you going to believe? A statement by an unknown person on a website with no reference and date/location of a supposed meeting or the statement in a book written by a founding leader of DMK (Reference 1; Fourth edition, p. 367-368)?

NOTE: Wikipedia does add, delete and change information in their articles. I hope that they remove the false statement soon. Even if wikipedia deletes this false information, other websites might have copied this information from wikipedia because people believe wikipedia information is true. So, if you see anyone saying DMK dropped Dravida Nadu demand before 1963, tell them the truth and educate them.

5. Concluding Remarks

When did DMK drop its independent Dravida Nadu demand? DMK Central Committee (Maththiya Seyarkuzu) voted unanimously to drop its demand for independent Dravida Nadu on November 3, 1963, about a month after the 16-th amendment to the Indian constitution was enacted on 5-th October 1963.

Why did DMK drop its independent Dravida Nadu demand? Because of the 16-th amendment to the Indian constitution enacted on 5-th October 1963; this amendment was commonly known in Tamil Nadu as "pirivinai thadai sattam" (Anti-Secessionist Law).

Antidote to lies and falsity is truth. If you hear anyone propagate false information, tell him/her the truth in a friendly manner.

References

1. Tamil book "Thee Mu Ka Varalaru" (History of DMK) by T. M. Parthasarathy, Bharathi Nilayam, Chennai, 1984 (Fourth Edition)." Mr. T. M. Parthasarathy was a founding DMK leader. The book has foreword/introduction by some of the top DMK leaders C. N. Annadurai M. Karunanidhi, K. A. Mthiazhagan, K. Anbazhagan and R. Arangannal. These are some of the influential people who made DMK history in those early years. Annadurai, Karunanidhi and Anbazhagan had served as General Secretaries of DMK at different times. So you can rely on facts presented in that book.

2. https://web.archive.org/web/20190805135942/https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dravida_Nadu

[First Published: July 2003; Updated September 2019]

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6.
Tamil Nadu Sought American Help for Independence from India in 1975

Thanjai Nalankilli

OUTLINE

Abbreviations
1. Introduction
2. Background
3. The Cable
4. Analysis and Discussion
4. 1 A Serious Attempt to Independence
4.2 Hidden Separatists Among Us

Abbreviations

DK - Dravidar Kazhadam
DMK - Dravida Munnetra Kazhadam

1. Introduction

This article is about a 1975 cable from the United States of America (USA) consulate in Chennai (Tamil Nadu, India) to their State Department in the American capital city Washington. It reveals that a Tamil Nadu State Government minister, Rajaram, belonging to the ruling DMK party, approached and enquired the USA consular officer if America would support Tamil Nadu independence. It was not some hypothetical query. It is clear from the cable that at least one top leader in the ruling DMK party, Rajaram, were seriously considering unilateral declaration of Independence for Tamil Nadu if America would support it. The cable is provided in its entirety in Section 3 of this article but some background information first.

2. Background

In order to understand the cable (which is presented in its entirety in Section 3), we present some background information first. Tamil Nadu independence movement dates back to 1938 [see Chapter 1]. DK and its offshoot DMK took up the cause in the 1940s. DMK leaders, they were some of the great Tamil orators of that time, thundered their demand for independent Dravida Nadu from platform to platform; their Dravida Nadu independence essentially meant Tamil Nadu independence [see Chapter 2]. DMK abandoned its independence demand in 1963 after the Indian Parliament passed the Sixteenth Amendment to the Indian Constitution that prohibited those who advocate separatism from running for public offices (such as Indian parliament and state legislative assembly) [Chapter 5]. Having given up the independence demand, DMK was able to contest in elections. DMK won the 1967 state assembly election and formed the state

government. DMK remained silent about independence for Tamil Nadu. The DMK government even sent police to stop some public meetings espousing Tamilnadu independence and arrested organizers.

In spite of the public posture of giving up the Tamil Nadu independence demand about 12 years before, a state government minister and a senior DMK leader, Rajaram, was enquiring if USA would support Tamil Nadu independence. This enquiry is described in the cable from the American consulate to the superiors in America. The cable is dated July 3, 1975, just about a week after the President of India, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, declared a state of emergency, upon request by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi; this gave the Prime Minister the power to rule by decree, suspending elections and civil liberties. Mrs. Indra Gandhi and her father Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru (the first Prime Minister of India) were sympathetic to "leftists ideas" and were friendlier with the Soviet Union (USSR) than with United States of America, although neither were Communists.

3. The Cable

Here is the cable in its entirety.

1.
I called on Tamil Nadu minister of labor and housing Rajaram at his residence last evening, and presented him a copy of the latest foreign service newsletter in which his picture with secretary Simon appears. The minister immediately asked what my reaction was to what had happened in India. I began to reply along the lines that a lot had happened since we last met. He interrupted and said: "I'm glad you came by because I was going to contact you. I want to ask you a leading question. Would the United States give assistance to us if Tamil Nadu decided to become independent?" I said I would reply equally directly, and the answer was no; this was an internal affair of India and we supported the territorial integrity of India and other countries. I asked if this was something that was being seriously considered. He said no, not at the highest levels; the DMK had several years ago abandoned secession as a policy.

But a lot of the younger people in the party have been talking about it in the past few days. These younger people, he said, are saying that the USSR and other communist countries are backing Mrs. Gandhi in her efforts to kill democracy here; if this succeeds, communist influence will grow, and Tamil Nadu should secede and the question of whether the U.S. would help has been discussed. That was why, the minister said, he had wanted to raise the matter with me.

2.
Rajaram did not revert to this again during the remainder of the conversation. We went on to talk about the current attitudes of the DMK and the Tamil Nadu government towards the emergency and Rajaram's views on future developments which are being reported SEPTEL. [Editor's Note: SEPTEL is an abbreviation for Separate Telegram.]

3.

Rajaram, who has been a minister since 1971 has been consistently friendly and accessible to the consulate general. He attended the dinner which I hosted for ambassador Saxbe, and has been to the United States twice. I am inclined to take what he said at face value, i.e., that there may be some talk among younger members of the party of possible independence if the situation in India should deteriorate very badly, but that it is not something that is now being seriously considered by the higher echelons of the party.

4. Since drafting the above, I have been visited by a local educator, previously unknown to me, who had asked for an appointment a couple of days ago. He claimed close association with the consulate in the days of Hank Ramsay and Paul Sherbert. He said his concern over the current situation had led him to call on the **Chief Minister** yesterday and to tell the Chief Minister that the situation might become so bad that Tamil Nadu should try to become independent and that, if the rest of India were under a Communist-influenced dictatorship, the U.S. might help. He said the Chief Minister had replied that he did not know what would happen next, but he was watching the situation closely; with regard to the U.S., the **Chief Minister** said that, after Vietnam, he did not think the U.S. would take on anything new in Asia. All of the above was a pretty one-sided conversation, as I had initially told him I was not going to comment on the situation at all.

[About the cable: The above cable was originally classified as "secret" and later decalssified and released (Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006). The cable is available on the Internet at https://web.archive.org/web/20191219081543/https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/1975NEWDE08889_b.html] and is also excerpted in some newspapers. The cable is dated "1975 July 3, 12:08 (Thursday)" and titled "Ministerial Query Re U.S. Attitude Towards Tamil Nadu Independence". Starting from 2010, the Wikileaks website published thousand of diplomatic cables from the embassies and consulates of the United States of America (USA). The above cable is one of those thus published.]

4. Analysis and Discussion

Having presented the American diplomatic cable in its entirety in Section 3, we present our analysis of the cable and the surrounding events in the context of Tamil Nadu nationalism and independence movement. This is our opinion.

4. 1 A Serious Attempt to Independence

DMK publicly dropped its independence demand in 1963 under threat of being banned from contesting elections. It is obvious from the cable that at least some DMK leaders and cadres had independence aspirations burning hot in their hearts in 1975, strong enough to approach a foreign power enquiring about support--a serious crime (treason) if it became known. Minister Rajaram's statement, "no, not at the highest levels; the DMK had several years ago abandoned secession as a policy. But a lot of the younger people in the party have been talking about it in the past few days" is an escape clause in case the conversation became public; as I said previously, what Rajaram was doing might be

considered treason. [This writer is not a lawyer and it is just an opinion on his part.] It is quite possible that younger cadres were asking leadership to take the emergency situation to secede from India. Unless some top leaders were also sympathetic to it, would a minister-level leader enquire American consulate if USA would support Tamil Nadu independence?

It is clear from the cable that Minister Rajaram did not mention it casually during a conversation. Here is the relevant quote from the cable: "**He interrupted and said: "I'm glad you came by because I was going to contact you. I want to ask you a leading question. Would the United States give assistance to us if Tamil Nadu decided to become independent?**"". Only after the consular officer said that USA would not support Tamilnadu independence that the minister said that independence was not considered at highest levels but a lot of the younger people in the party have been talking about it.

In the opinion of this writer, it seems that at least some senior leaders would not be averse to declaring independence if America was ready assist. What I try to point out is that public abandonment of secession or separatism, under the threat of gun or, as in this case, under threat of political ban, may not mean much; what is deep in the heart does not change. How many leaders of Tamil Nadu political parties are secret separatists today? We may never know because their voices are gagged by the 1963 Sixteenth Amendment to the Indian Constitution.

Minister Rajaram tells the consular officer, "**a lot of the younger people in the party have been talking about it in the past few days**". After DMK gave up independence in 1963, there was no mention of independence within DMK, yet aspirations for independence seems to be alive among younger cadres. How may young people today secretly hope for independence but are afraid to talk about it?

4.2 Hidden Separatists Among Us

The cable also mentions an unnamed educator "canvassing" for independence. How many teachers, professors, professionals, factory workers, farmers and students today are secretly hoping for independence? Indian government and other opponents of Tamil Nadu independence often say that the people of Tamil Nadu want to be part of India. How do they know? May be a plebiscite (referendum) in Tamil Nadu would clarify.

[First Published: June 2013]

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7.
Annadurai's Speech on Independence for Dravida Nadu (or Tamil Nadu)

Thanjai Nalankilli

C. N. Annadurai, popularly known as Arinjar Anna, was the former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu State (1967-1969). He passed away in 1969. The following are excerpts from his speech at a Dravidar Kazagam Conference in Tiruchi in the 1945. The speech in Tamil was published in Reference 1. (NOTE: All materials within square parentheses [ ] below are by the translator to clarify and put matters within proper context.)

"**India is a continent; it should be divided into a number of countries**. The continent of Europe has 32 independent countries. No one argues that it should be a single country ruled by a single government. Similarly there is no need for India to be under a single government". [Translator's Note: This speech was made in the 1940s. Some may argue today that Europe is uniting as a European Union. Note that European Union is not a country; it is a union of sovereign independent countries. Indian states are not sovereign independent countries that have the right to get out of the Union if they so choose. European countries have that sovereign right. That is a major and important difference. So Annadurai's statement is valid even today.]

"Aryan influence increases within a single country called India. Welfare of the other races is crushed under Aryan rule. Uniting different races under a single country leads to rebellions and troubles. In order to prevent such troubles and bloodshed in India, we should divide India according to racial lines now." [Translator's Note: In essence Annadurai had foretold the armed uprisings and bloodlettings in Punjab and the northeastern states.]

"Even during the days of the emperors Ashoka, Kanishkar, Samudra Gupta and Akbar, India was not a single country.

"If India is divided into many countries, **each country could develop its economy according to its circumstances**. It would also put an end to one region robbing the resources of another. All races can achieve equality only if each race has its own country and government. We fear the thought of one race living under the rule of another. This fear gives birth to violent rebellion. It is necessary to divide India racially to prevent such violent revolutions. The reason one race has not choked another race to death in India so far is the British guns. When the British leave, India will become a killing field [unless it is divided into different countries on racial basis]." [Translator's Note: Again Annadurai is foretelling the armed uprisings and bloodlettings in Punjab and the northeastern states.]

(Translated from Tamil to English by Thanjai Nalankilli)

REFERENCE

1. T. M. Parthasarathi, Thee Mu Kaa Varalaaru (History of DMK), Bharathi Nilayam, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, Fourth Edtion, 1984, page 27.

[First Published: May 2005]

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8.
Karunanidhi on Tamil Nadu Independence

Thanjai Nalankilli

OUTLINE

1. The News
2. Background Information

1. The News

Speaking at the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) general council meeting on January 9, 2015, the party President and former TamilNadu Chief Minister Karunanidhi said, “even if Tamil Nadu for Tamils is not realized and Tamil Nadu could not be attained in the immediate future, we should have the determination to protect the Tamil language, Tamils and the party.” (The New Indian Express; January 10, 2015). DMK is one of the two dominant political parties in Tamil Nadu The other dominant political party is its offshoot, All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK). As of this writing (2015), either DMK or AIADMK has ruled the state since 1967.

2. Background Information

DMK championed the cause of independent Tamil Nadu (or, if possible, independent Dravida Nadu comprising the four southern states of India) starting from its inception in 1949. Its parent party Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) also called for independent Dravida Nadu from its inception in 1944. The first call for Tamil Nadu independence seems to have been made by the Tamil Nation Liberation Association (Tamil Desa Viduthalai Sangam) in August 1938 [Chapter 1]. The DMK Central Committee (Maththiya Seyarkuzu) voted to drop the independence demand on November 3, 1963, after the Indian Parliament passed the Sixteenth Amendment to the Indian Constitution; the amendment prohibited those who advocate separatism from contesting for Indian parliament or state legislative assembly [see Chapter 5]. The only way DMK could continue to contest elections was to drop the Tamil Nadu independence demand.

[First Published: April 2015]

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9.
Annadurai on Central Government Ministers from Tamil Nadu

Thanjai Nalankilli

Outline

1. Annaduari's Words of Wisdom
2. Economic Discrimination Continues
3. Experts on Tamil Nadu's Economic Development
4. Non-Hindi Ministers are Powerless Before Hindi Political Leadership

1. Annaduari's Words of Wisdom

Much is said these days about how Tamil Nadu has now 12 ministers in the Indian Union Government (Central Government) and thus there should be no complaint of economic or other discrimination of Tamilnadu by the Indian government. We quote here what Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) founder and former Tamil Nadu State Chief Minister C. N. Annadurai had to say about ministerial representation in the Indian central government.

"Southern India is discriminated in industrial development. No new iron plant; no new rail line; no petroleum refinery. No noteworthy industrial plant is allocated to southern India. Instead of building an iron plant, the ministry of heavy industries is given to a south Indian. Is it political skill?" (from C. N. Annadurai's maiden speech at the Upper House of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) in 1962)

Annadurai's speech is very telling. He points out that the Indian government has "skillfully" appointed a south Indian as heavy industries minister in order to mute complaints of discrimination in industrial development in south India. Annadurai would rather prefer an industrial plant built in the south than a south Indian minister in charge of heavy industries. Though he does not explicitly say it, implicit in his statement is that heavy industries ministry for south India does not necessarily mean setting up of heavy industries in south India equitably.

2. Economic Discrimination Continues

Forty three years have passed since Annadurai's speech. Indian government is using the same tactic today. Players have changed but the same drama goes on.

Tamil Nadu was given 12 minister positions out of the total of 66 in 2004 (more than many other states of comparable population). But Tamil Nadu is discriminated in infrastructure development necessary to attract industrial plants and other businesses into Tamilnadu. In the 1950s and 1960s, DMK was at the forefront of pointing out the discriminations. Today DMK is part of the ruling alliance at the central government.

DMK has 7 of the 12 ministers from Tamilnadu. Its voice on behalf of Tamil Nadu is now muted. How can it complain of discrimination when it was given so many minister positions? [We are not singling out DMK. When AIADMK or other Tamil-centric parties have minister positions at the Indian government, they too keep silence much of the time when Tamil Nadu is discriminated. Still we would rather see DMK, AIADMK and other Tamil-centric parties win elections than All-India Parties like Congress and BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party)].

Tamilnadu is being discriminated today even though there are 12 ministers from Tamil Nadu in the Indian government (2005). Here are two examples. Tamil Nadu Finance Minister, C. Ponnaiyan, told the state assembly on March 11, 2005 how Tamil Nadu was getting a raw deal in the Twelfth Finance Commission (TFC) recommendations (The Hindu; March 12, 2005). Chief Minister Jayalalithaa Jeyaram identified on March 25, 2005 several specific areas in which Tamil Nadu was discriminated (New Indian Express; March 26, 2005). These complaints cannot be brushed aside as politically motivated because these statements, as published in the referenced newspapers, include specific details and data that could be verified independently.

Some might say that, "Tamil Nadu is doing well in the software, automobile and certain other industries. Why are you complaining?" In spite of Indian Government discrimination in building rail lines, internet cable systems and harbours, Tamil Nadu is doing well in certain industrial sectors because of the hard work of our students in their school years and hard work later at employment. **But for the discrimination, the standard of living in Tamil Nadu would be much higher.** Tamil people are not getting the full reward for their hard work at schools and offices and factories and farms because of the discrimination. This should change.

3. Experts on Tamil Nadu's Economic Development

"India's growth would have progressed better if it comprised its southern and western parts only...The rest of the country held the South and West back", P. Chidamparam, Minister of Finance, India (2004-2008) to the American Ambassador in a conversation in August 2009. Mr. Chidambaram is not only a politicians, he has a Bachelor's degree in statistics from the Presidency College, Chennai (Tamil nadu) and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree from the world-renowned Harvard University in America. He knows what he is talking.

Not only in economic progress but also in the delivery of public services, such as food, health care and school education, Tamil Nadu would be better off as a separate country. "A number of Indian states--Kerala and Tamil Nadu, for example--would be at the top of the South Asian comparisons if they were treated as separate countries, and others--Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, for example--would do enormously worse." - Professors Jean Drèze and Amartya Sen in their 2013 book “An Uncertain Glory: India and its Contradictions” (both authors are economists and Amartya Sen received the Nobel prize in economics in 1998).

What matters is not the number of Indian government ministers from Tamil Nadu, what matters is the end of e. Hindi hegemony and conomic discrimination of Tamil Nadu.

4. Non-Hindi Ministers are Powerless Before Hindi Political Leadership

Here are two examples to illustrate the point that what matters is not the number of Indian government ministers from Tamil Nadu, what matters is the end of Hindi hegemony and economic discrimination of Tamil Nadu.

M. K. Alagiri from Tamilnadu was appointed Chemicals and Fertilizers minister in mid-2009. He does not know Hindi and his English proficiency is limited. When he asked permission from the Speaker of Parliament, Meira Kumar, to speak in his mother tongue, she told him that ministers would be allowed to speak only in English and Hindi (Members of Parliament can speak in their mother tongue if they provide a copy of the entire speech at least 24 hours before). He suffered in silence; he sat quiet or simply did not attend parliament. Some ask, "why did he not resign?" or why his party, Dravida Munnertra Kazhagam (DMK), withdraw support to the Congress-led government. He could have resigned on principle but it would not change India's Hindi-supremacist language policies. Hindi politicians from other parties would have supported the government so that Hindi-supremacist Hindi policies continue. This is the language situation in Indian politics.

Second example. India's Parliamentary Committee on Official Language made 117 recommendations on the use of Hindi in 2011. President of India accepted 110 of these recommendations in 2017. Some non-Hindi politicians criticized that government is unfairly imposing Hindi (The Hindu, April 25, 2017). The relevant point here is that the Parliamentary Committee on Official Language was chaired by the Home Minister Mr. P. Chidamparam, who is from the non-Hindi state of Tamil Nadu. When asked about the recommendation, Chidamparam said that the recommendations were written by the drafting sub-committee chaired by Satyavrat Chaturvedi. He added that 28 of the 30 members of the committee belonged to Hindi speaking or Hindi knowing states, and the proceedings of the committee were conducted in Hindi [a language he did not know well]. He said that the chairman cannot overrule the views of the overwhelming majority. (Deccan Chronicle; April 26, 2017) This makes our point. Chairman is from a non-Hindi state but the committee is stacked with pro-Hindi members whose vote the chairman cannot overrule. The non-Hindi chairman is only a figure head.

So the number of non-Hindi ministers or number of non-Hindi officers makes no difference. Hindi hegemony will continue. Also, non-Hindi politicians have served as Finance Minister of India but economic policies that hugely favoured Hindi states (as discussed in section 2) continued during their tenure too.

POST SCRIPT

Having more ministers in the Indian central government is well and good but they have no power to stop Hindi political hegemony over non-Hindi states like Tamil Nadu. Here

is an example of the outrageous economic explotation of Tamil Nadu. For every 100 Rupees Indian government collects in taxes from Tamil Nadu, only 40 Rupees is given back to Tamil Nadu in the form of financial grants, central government projects, etc. Now compare it to the Hindi state of Uttar Pradesh. For every 100 Rupees Indian government collects in taxes from Uttar Pradesh, 176 Rupees is given to Uttar Pradesh in the form of financial grants, central government projects, etc. Other South Indian states also are economically discriminated similarly. [The above data is from Reference 1]. We want all states receive back the same percentage of our taxes. That is the only non-discriminatory way.

Reference

1. The News Minute: 14 July 2016
[
http://web.archive.org/web/20160715145421/http://www.thenewsminute.com/article/united-states-south-india-can-southern-collective-get-us-better-deal-delhi-46501]

[First Published February 2006; Updated April 2018]

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10.
Jayalalithaa on Indian Central Government, Federalism, Finances and Devolution of Power to States

Thanjai Nalankilli

OUTLINE

1. Introduction
2. Chief Minister Jayalalithaa's Speech

1. Introduction

Ms. Jayalalithaa Jeyaram (or J. Jayalalthaa) is an unlikely leader of a major Dravidian Party in Tamil Nadu. A latecomer to politics, she quickly rose to the top of one of the two major Dravidian Parties and carried the mantle of a Dravidian leader who stood up to the Indian government to protect Tamil interests. Jayalalithaa started as a well liked and box office hit film actress from an early age. Her male costar in many movies was Mr. M. G. Ramachandran. MGR, as he was popularly known, was a longtime member and top level leader of Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK). He split from DMK and formed AIADMK in 1972. He became Tamil Nadu Chief Minister in 1977. Ms. Jayalalithaa joined AIADMK in 1982 at the invitation of MGR. After the untimely dearth of M. G. Ramachandran in 1987, there was a power struggle between MGR's widow Mrs. Janaki Ramachandran and Jayalalithaa. The latter won and took control of the party in 1989. Jayalalthaa lead AIADMK to victory in the 1991 state election and became Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu.

Although she did not grow up from her youth in Dravidian ideologies and politics, she stood for Dravidian parties' top goals today: opposition to Hindi imposition and devolution of substantial power to Tamil Nadu. Unlike most Dravidian political leaders of her age, she never participated in anti-Hindi imposition protests or arrested for that. Yet her opposition to Hindi imposition as Chief Minister is comparable to her predecessors C. N. Annadurai, M. Karunanidhi and M. G. Ramachandran.

On the issue of state rights and devolution of power to states, Chief Minister Jayalalithaa is second to none. In this article we present excerpts from one of her speeches on devolution of power. As usual, such speeches from Tamil Nadu and other state chief ministers fall into deaf years in New Delhi. We do not see devolution of power coming. Instead more and more power is transferred from state governments to Indian (central) government in New Delhi.

2. Chief Minister Jayalalithaa's Speech

Ms Jayalalithaa made a speech at a conference on internal security in New Delhi on April 16, 2012. Much of that speech dealt with the needs of Tamil Nadu state police and law

enforcement agencies and how the central government is reducing monies to Tamil Nadu in these areas instead of increasing it. The speech also contains her thoughts on federalism, finances, devolution and state government powers. Here are some excerpts from her speech. [Although the Chief Minister is speaking in reference to "policing" (internal security), her statements are equally applicable to number of other areas such as education, environment, transportation and a number of other areas.]

1)
"The constant attempts to reduce States to the level of glorified Municipal Corporations heavily dependent on the Centre for funds is a travesty of the federal nature of our existence. This attitude is disturbing and the implication of such exercises is not conducive to either State or National growth."

2)
"There can be no uniform pattern in policing in the country as each State has its own distinct cultural, communal, social and economic aspects."

3)
"Trying to intimidate and browbeat the States through top down structures particularly when 'Police' is a State subject is not acceptable. In other words, there are continuous veiled attempts by the Centre to weaken the States with too much interference which is detrimental to the national interest."

4)
"Endeavoring to encroach on State powers either by creating parallel authorities monitored from the Centre or vicarious operations of State police powers through creation of Centre monitored caucuses within the States, as was envisaged in the Railway Protection Force, National Counter Terrorism Centre etc., to say the least, are contraventions of the constitutional provisions which accord the 'Police' priority status in the State list."

[First Published: July 2012]

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11.
Karunanidhi - Protector of Tamil Language (Mozhi Kaavalar Mu. Karunanidhi)

Thanjai Nalankilli

OUTLINE

1. The Announcement
2. The Ordinance
3. More to Do

1. Karunanidhi's Announcement

On June 27, 2010, at the closing ceremony of the First World Classical Tamil Conference in Coimbatore (Kovai), Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Muthuvel Karunanidhi made a major announcement. The significance of this significant announcement might have been lost on most of the conference visitors and the general public, amongst the gala and glitter of the conference. In the opinion of this writer, this announcement and its implementation would have more long term implications to the future of Tamil language than anything else that happened at the conference or, for that matter, anything else Karunanidhi had done during his tenures as chief minister of Tamilnadu State. But for this announcement and its implementation, Tamil might have become a "useless language", ignored and neglected by people even in Tamil Nadu.

What is this major announcement that Chief Minister Karunanidhi made at the closing ceremony of the First World Classical Tamil Conference? He announced that the state government would bring forth a law giving preference to Tamil-medium students in state government jobs. If anyone thought that the chief minister had made the announcement in the exuberance of the festivities of the conference and there would be no follow up action, that was not to be. In less than two weeks after the announcement, on July 9, 2010, the first appointment under the new scheme was made.

2. Karunanidhi Ordinance and its Significance

On the second week of September 2010, Tamil Nadu State Government promulgated an ordinance reserving 20% of all state government jobs to those who studied in Tamil medium. This reservation applies to direct state government jobs as well as to jobs at local authorities, corporations and companies owned or controlled by the state government. Persons who have studied in Tamil medium could also compete with others for vacancies over and above the 20% reservation.

In the opinion of this writer, this "Karunanidhi ordinance" provides at least a partial measure of protection against Tamil becoming a useless language within Tamilnadu itself. What was the status of Tamil in Tamil Nadu before the ordinance? More and more

parents were enrolling their children in English-medium classes. More and more parents were asking their children to study Hindi and get certificates from organizations like Hindi Prachar Sabha. Studying Tamil was neglected and, if one could get through schools without studying Tamil, many opted for it. Why were more and more parents concentrating on English, and even Hindi, and neglecting Tamil? Parents were thinking of the future of their children. That is what parents do; they do everything possible for their children to have good jobs and a better future. English and Hindi gave those opportunities and Tamil did not.

English is widely used within Tamil Nadu at businesses, universities and state government offices with only a limited use of Tamil. Proficiency in Tamil is seldom a requirement for working in these places, especially for white-collar jobs. As for Indian government offices within Tamil Nadu, all work is done in English and Hindi. No need for Tamil at all. In short, the situation in Tamil Nadu was that a formal knowledge of Tamil is not a necessity in Tamil Nadu. So more and more parents sent their children to English medium schools, asked them to learn Hindi and simply ignored their mother tongue Tamil. It has nothing to do with disrespect for Tamil or love for English and Hindi. It has all to do with jobs, jobs, jobs.

Only way to attract students to Tamil medium education in schools or colleges is to offer them job opportunities. Chief Minister Karunanidhi tackled the problem right at the root. He had created job opportunities for Tamil medium students through the 20% reservation order. By this single act, the chief minister had assured that there would be a steady stream of Tamil medium students in schools and colleges.

Tamil lovers were worried in recent years that as more and more students opt for English medium education and abandon Tamil medium education, more and more work would be done in both private and government sector offices in English, and Tamil would become an useless language in Tamil Nadu itself. Such a situation exists in countries like South Africa and Mauritius where sizable Tamil Nadu origin people live. Because they are a small minority, naturally, Tamil has very little use in government and businesses. So Tamil is essentially a forgotten language to a great extent. The same situation of Tamil becoming a forgotten language, a useless language, was developing in Tamil Nadu itself. Chief Minister Karunanidhi's timely and effective action had turned the tide. We thank Chief Minister Karunanidhi and offer him the title "Protector of Tamil Language" (Mozhi Kaavalar).

3. More to Do

There is more to do in order to consolidate the protection that the new "Karunanidhi ordinance" offers. We list them below.

1. Make high school level or college level knowledge of Tamil a requirement for all Tamil Nadu government jobs depending on whether the job requires a high school certificate or a college degree. This does not mean one has to study in Tamil medium; it

means that one needs to study Tamil as a subject in school or college or pass a comparable Tamil language examination.

2. Although Tamil was declared the official language of Tamil Nadu decades ago, it is not implemented in many offices. Set a timetable for implementing fully. In addition, English may still be used for communication with multi-national companies in Tamil Nadu. Language shall not become a deterrent to attract foreign investments in Tamilnadu.

3. Eliminate the requirement of Hindi knowledge for Indian government jobs within Tamil Nadu and make knowledge of Tamil a requirement. All communications in Indian government offices within Tamil Nadu shall be in Tamil. We know that this is beyond the power of state government and require Indian government action. Tamil Nadu political leaders should make it a requirement for alliance with All-India parties like the Congress Party and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

In conclusion, we again thank Chief Minister Karunanidhi for what he had done and offer him the title "Protector of Tamil Language" (Mozhi Kaavalar)!

[First Published: November 2010]

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12.
Karunanidhi and Rajiv Gandhi: Posthumous Reconciliation

(Political Expediencies within India-Tamil Nadu Power Structure)

Thanjai Nalankilli

OUTLINE

1. Far Back in the Memory Lane
2. Fast Forward to 2007
3. The Big Lesson

1. Far Back in the Memory Lane

Year 1953. Muthuvel Karunanidhi was one of the upper level leader in the almost four-year old Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK). DMK opposed the renaming of Kallakudi town as "Dalmiapuram" in honour of the north Indian industrialist Dalmia, whose company built a cement plant there. Why was DMK opposed to this renaming? "Dalmia is a north Indian. Renaming a town in Tamilnadu in honor of a north Indian is an insult to Tamils", so some people thought. There was nothing else against Mr. Dalmia except that he was a north Indian.

Karunanidhi headed the demonstration at the Dalmiapuram railway station on July 15, 1953. A train came and stopped at the station as usual. Demonstrators shouted slogans and, as the train was about to leave the station, Karunanidhi and four others laid on the rail track in front of the train. Police arrested them. More demonstrators lied on the rail track in front of the train. They were also arrested. At no time was there any danger of the train running over the demonstrators. Everyone knew that police would remove them from the track. But it was an effective and dramatic means of publicizing DMK's opposition to changing the name Kallakudi to Dalmiapuram. It was front page news all through Tamil Nadu. Karunanidhi's fame shot up and his position within the DMK hierarchy rose.

Fourteen years later, in 1967, DMK swept to power in Tamil Nadu state in the wake of the 1965 anti-Hindi agitation. The new DMK state government changed the name Dalmiapuram back to Kallakudi. (A part of the town is still called Dalmiapuram.)

2. Fast Forward to 2007

On August 20, 2007, at a commemoration ceremony of the late Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's sixty third birthday, Tamilnadu Chief Minister Muthuvel Karunanidhi told the audience that his government would rename the Old Mahapalipuram Road (OMR) to Rajiv Gandhi Road (in Tamil, "Rajiv Gandhi Salai"). This is an important road that runs right through the information technology corridor adjacent to Chennai (Madras), with lot

of traffic from local people and visiting business people, industrialists, engineers and scientists.

We cannot but recall the events of 1953 when we heard of Karunanidhi renaming an important road after Rajiv Gandhi. Karunanidhi's objection to renaming Kallakudi to Dalmiapuram in 1953 was that Mr. Dalmia was a north India; there was nothing he did against Tamil Nadu or Tamil people. What about Rajiv Gandhi? Like Dalmia, Rajiv Gandhi was also from north India. However, unlike Dalmia, Rajiv Gandhi's hands are stained.

It was Rajiv Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India in 1987, who sent Indian military into Tamil regions of Sri Lanka to disarm the Tamil militant group Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), fighting for minority Tamil rights. It is well documented by impartial, international human rights organizations that the Indian military killed hundreds of Tamil male, female and young civilians (including execution style cold blooded murders) and raped Tamil women. When the Indian army returned back to India in 1990, Karunanidhi was the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. He refused to attend the "welcome back ceremony" to the returning Indian soldiers although it was held in Chennai (where Karunanidhi lived and worked).

Now, this same Karunanidhi is renaming an important road after the Rajiv Gandhi who sent the Indian military to Sri Lanka. Why would he do that? Answer: Political expediency.

When Karunanidhi refused to welcome back the Indian soldiers in 1990, some labeled him anti-Indian and called for his dismissal. Indian government had the power to dismiss any state government (even without a valid reason). The then Prime Minister V. P. Singh did not do so because he had a political alliance with Karunanidhi's Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK). Political patronage in high places in New Delhi probably saved Karunanidhi. Less than a year later, in 1991, the then Prime Minister Chandrasekhar in fact dismissed his government claiming that it was allowing LTTE facilities in Tamilnadu.

Ploitical alliances have changed in 2007. Now, Chief Minister Karunanidhi's Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) is allied with the Congress Party and Rajiv Gandhi's widow is the President of Congress Party. Naming an important street after Rajiv Gandhi would be a nice gesture. Political expediency.

So, why did a man who demonstrated against the renaming of Kallakudi after a northern industrialist Dalmia rename Old Mahapalipuram Road (OMR) after a northern Hindi politician (Rajiv Gandhi)? Political expediency. Why did the man who refused to attend the ceremony welcoming Indian soldiers back from Sri Lanka honour the man who sent those soldiers to Sri Lanka? Political expediency.

3. The Big Lesson

What is the "big lesson" for Tamil people from this episode?

Indian political system is framed such that political power is tilted heavily in favour of the Indian (central) government. Hindi belt politicians dominate the Indian parliament because of their large numbers (although not a majority) and thus control the Indian government. These Hindi belt politicians could dismiss Tamil Nadu state government even if it came to power with an overwhelming majority of votes in Tamil Nadu. Even powerful Tamil politicians like Karunanidhi, who has Tamil in his heart, has to put aside Tamil interests if it conflicts with the interests and wishes of Hindi politicians in order to stay in power. As an astute politician, Karunanidhi knows this and had to grudgingly honour a Hindi politician who sent Indian military against Tamils in Sri Lanka. But make no mistake, Tamil is at the depth of Karunanidhi's heart. I hope that he would get out of politics and lead the Tamil people without the constraints of political expediencies. DMK may continue as a political party under the next generation of leadership.

[First Published: December 2007]

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13.
Did Indian Government "Threaten" Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Karunanidhi to Tow its Line on the Sri Lankan Ethnic Conflict?

Thanjai Nalankilli

[NOTE: This article was written in the second half of December 2008 when tens of thousands of Tamil civilians were being killed in Sri Lanka by Sri Lankan military aerial bombing and artillery shelling.]

OUTLINE

Abbreviations
1. Tamil Civilian Casualties in the Sri Lankan War
2. India and Tamil Nadu on the North
3. Demonstrations in Tamilnadu
4. Chief Minister Karunanidhi
5. Chief Minister Sets a Deadline and a Threat
6. Did Pranab Mukherjee "Threaten" Chief Minister Karunanidhi?
7. A Dossier on Tamil Nadu Chief Minister
8. Can Tamil Nadu Do Anything to Help Sri Lankan Tamils?
9. Murmurs of Tamil Nadu Independence
9.1 Samarasinghe's Statement
9.2 Pandian's Statement

ABBREVIATIONS

CPI - Communist Party of India
CPI(M) - Communist Party of India (Marxist)
DMK - Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
IB - Intelligence Bureau
IT - Information Technology
LTTE - Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MDMK - Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
MP - Member of Parliament
PMK - Pattali Makkal Katchi
SLAF - Sri Lankan Air Force
UN - United Nations
UPA - United Progressive Alliance
USA - United States of America

1. Tamil Civilian Casualties in the Sri Lankan War

There is a war going on in Sri Lanka between the army and the minority Tamil rebels, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The war started in the 1970s but got more

intense and bloody after the 1983 ant-Tamil riots that took the lives of hundreds of Tamil civilians. A ceasefire agreement was signed in 2002 but fighting started again in 2006 after President Mahinda Rajapaksa came to power. Sri Lankan military purchased several bomber aircrafts, got training, mostly, from Pakistan and India, and relied heavily on bombings to gain advantage over the LTTE. Sri Lankan Air Force (SLAF) bombings caused heavy Tamil civilian casualties. According to the Sri Lankan government, its air force had dropped 14.4 million kilogrammes of bombs (more than the equivalence of the Hiroshima nuclear bomb in explosive power). While SLAF routinely gives out LTTE casualties, it says that it does not keep count of Tamil civilian asualties, a sign of total disregard for Tamil civilians.

2. India and Tamil Nadu on the North

India, the emerging regional power, is just north of Sri Lanka. In India is the state of Tamil Nadu, separated from the Tamil northeast of Sri Lanka by only 53 kilometers of sea. There live 60 million Tamils who are of the same ethnic stock as Sri Lankan Tamils; both have the same culture and speak the same language. Cries of the Sri Lankan Tamil civilians suffering from persistent aerial bombings and artillery shelling did not go unheard in Tamil Nadu. Tamil are only a minority in India (although 60 million in number, they are less than 10% of the Indian population). They and their state government have to plead with the Indian Government to help their Tamil brethren in Sri Lanka. India was not only quiet over Tamil civilian killings, it was, in fact, providing military assistance to Sri Lanka. Indian government is dominated by Hindi politicians from the north, because Hindi people constitute approximately 40% of the Indian population. Unlike the Tamils of Tamil Nadu State, Hindi politicians from the north have no affinity or sympathy towards Sri Lankan Tamils.

3. Demonstrations in Tamil Nadu

There were large-scale demonstrations in Tamil Nadu during the last few months of 2008 urging the Indian Government to pressure Sri Lanka to a ceasefire so the bombings and shelling of Tamil civilians would end. (This article is written in the second-half of December 2008.) Every segment of society expressed its concern for fellow Tamils and urged India to bring about a ceasefire in Sri Lanka. Political parties, students, lawyers, shop keepers, information technology (IT) professionals, writers, doctors, movie artists and technicians, television artists and technicians were among those who participated in a variety of demonstration--processions, public meetings, one-day fasts, human chain, etc. Yet no action from the Indian Government; no call for ceasefire but continued flow of military assistance to Sri Lanka.

4. Chief Minister Karunanidhi

Caught between the Indian government and the people of Tamilnadu was Muthuvel Karunanidhi, the Chief Minister of Tamilnadu State . He was not only the chief minister of the state but his party, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), was part of the ruling alliance/coalition of the Indian government (United Progressive Alliance - UPA).

Pressure mounted on Chief Minister Karunanidhi to put pressure on the Indian government to pressure Sri Lanka to a ceasefire. Karunanidhi knew that the Hindi politicians in parliament who essentially controlled Indian foreign and military policies were not interested in ending the war in Sri Lanka. Unlike the people and politicians of Tamil Nadu, Hindi politicians from the north have no blood bond with Sri Lankan Tamils nor have they any empathy for them.

5. Chief Minister Sets a Deadline and a Threat

Chief Minister Muthuvel Karunanidhi's actions vis-a-vis the Sri Lankan issue may be divided into three phases.

5.1 Phase 1: Initial Response (Silent and Passive)

Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi was silent and passive during the initial demonstrations by other political parties and groups. Though parties and organizations like Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK) and Tamil National Movement (Tamil Desiya Iyakkam) had been active in supporting the Tamil cause in Sri Lanka for the past several years, demonstrations started by the Communist Party of India (CPI) in October 2008 cascaded to large scale, multiple demonstrations around Tamil Nadu. Neither this party nor its Tamil Nadu leader D. Pandian is known for taking up Tamil causes and so this was a surprise to many, a pleasant surprise to some. (Even now it is opposed to an independent Tamil country in the Sri Lankan island.) Karunanidhi simply ignored CPI's call for statewide demonstrations because CPI did not have a large vote bank in Tamil Nadu. Then Ms. Jayalalithaa Jeyaram of the powerful AIADMK party threw her support for the demonstration. Now Karunanidhi took stock of the situations and charted his own course of action to demonstrate his support for Sri Lankan Tamils.

5.2 Phase 2: A demand and a Deadline (Sincere, Genuine and Forceful): Pre-Pranab-Meeting

Before his meeting with the Indian External Affairs Minister (Foreign Minister) Pranab Mukherji, Chief Minister Karunanidhi's actions seem to be sincere, genuine and forceful. After the meeting his actions were decidedly fake and insincere with a sense of utter powerlessness. Let us look at the pre-Pranab-meeting scenario first.

Karunanidhi thundered, "**If the atrocities against Sri Lankan Tamils do not stop we must answer the question 'Do we need this government?**'" (He was referring to the Indian government in which his party was an alliance partner.) The most important and key action on the part of Chief Minister Karunanidhi was the All-Party Meeting he convened. Most of the parties in Tamil Nadu attended the all-party meeting held on October 14, 2008. After the meeting Karunanidhi announced that all 39 members of parliament from the State of Tamilnadu and the Union Territory of Puducherry would resign if the Indian government does not come forward to ensure a ceasefire in Sri Lanka within two weeks. A few days later both CPI(M) and Congress Party said that they did

not agree to the resignation at the meeting [CPI(M) is different from CPI that initiated the demonstrations]. MDMK did not attend the meeting but it agreed to the resignation.

The All-Party Meeting resolution was a good one. It had a definite goal (ceasefire), a specific deadline (two weeks) and a specific consequence if the goal was not met (resignation of MPs). Even with CPI(M) and Congress Party MPs not resigning, with the resignation of DMK, PMK, MDMK and CPI members of parliament the Congress-led alliance ruling India would lose parliamentary majority unless it receives some support from opposition parties from other states. Karunanidhi might have thought that, with the threat of losing power, Congress Party would act and bring about the ceasefire. Some analysts think that Karunanidhi never intended to go through with the resignation and it was all a drama to appease the people of Tamil Nadu. This writer is of the opinion that Karunanidhi might be making a genuine and sincere effort to pressure the Indian government to act and bring about a ceasefire. We would at least give him the benefit of the doubt. **He is truly a committed "Tamil patriot"** but his actions as DMK leader and chief minister are clouded by political ambitions and expediencies.

5.3 Pranab Mukherjee - Karunanidhi Meeting (A Slap on the Face of Tamil Nadu)

Indian External Affair Minister Pranab Mukherji came to Chennai and met Chief Minister Karunanidhi on October 26, 2008. It was a private meeting and there were no meeting minutes released. After the meeting, the external affairs minister flatly ruled out asking the Sri Lankan Government to ceasefire. After the meeting Karunanidhi made a total flip flap. He said that DMK members of parliament would not resign because India is doing all that was needed to resolve the ethnic issue. Only concession, if it could be called a concession, that India made was that it would allow from India some food and relief supplies to go to Tamil civilians in the war zone. [Indian government was blocking such relief from Tamil Nadu for over a year (a few hundred tons of food and medicine).] In the ensuing month about 5000 tons of food was sent. To put it in proper perspective, the far away Australian Government had sent 5000 tons of food to affected Tamil civilians in December 2008.

In essence, External Affair Minister Pranab Mukherjee did not meet the all-party resolution for ceasefire. Indian Government also refused to stop military assistance to Sri Lanka. Indian External Affair Minister Pranab Mukherjee told the upper house of parliament (Rajya Sabha) on October 23, 2008 that security cooperation with Sri Lanka, including training of Sri Lankan military officers, would continue.

Yet Karunanidhi meekly said that his party MPs would not resign per the all-party resolution. Instead Karunanidhi said, "The opinions of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and the External Affair Minister are congruent with the decision taken at the all-party meeting on October 14, 2008 underscoring the need for a negotiated political solution to the Sri Lankan Tamils' problem". In view of India's refusal to call for a ceasefire and stop its military assistance to Sri Lanka, it was a totally false statement, hoping to fool and pacify the people of Tamil Nadu. But most people were not fooled. PMK leader Dr. S. Ramadoss said that the all-party meeting resolutions were not met. CPI leader D. Pandian

said that none of the resolutions passed in the all-party meeting had been taken seriously by the Indian Government but the Chief Minister is saying that he is satisfied.

5.4 Phase 3: Pleading and Crying (Powerless and Subservient): Post-Pranab-Meeting

The private meeting with Pranab Mukherjee brought about a total turnaround in Karunanidhi. Obviously the Indian external affairs minister refused to pressure or even ask Sri Lanka to ceasefire. Karunanidhi tried to save face, declaring victory. As stated in the last paragraph of Section 5.3, Karunanidhi pretended that Indian government had agreed to the All-Party Resolution. It was false; he knew it and the people knew it.

In the ensuing weeks, as of now, Karunanidhi seems indecisive, erratic and totally powerless. One day he would say that India is doing everything possible and thank Congress Party President Ms. Sonia Gandhi and Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh. Another day he would ask India to bring about an end to the war. The man who roared like a lion, "If the atrocities against Sri Lankan Tamils do not stop we must answer the question 'Do we need this government?'" is reduced to pleading, "**With tears in my eyes I am making this request (to end the war)**" (December 26, 2008). Karunanidhi's pleading and crying do not in anyway disgrace him in our eyes. We know that this proud, grand old man of Tamil Nadu politics was begging and pleading to Indian rulers because he genuinely wants to end the sufferings of Sri Lankan Tamils. This is what our chief minister, elected by the people of Tamil Nadu, is reduced to within India. The sixty million people of Tamil Nadu are utterly powerless to do anything to protect fellow Tamils in the nearby island of Sri Lanka. This situation should change.

6. Did Pranab Mukherjee "Threaten" Chief Minister Karunanidhi?

6.1 What happened at the Pranab Mukherjee Meeting?

Mukherjee-Karunanidhi meeting was private and so we are not privy to what was said behind closed doors. What was the reason for Chief Minister Karunanidhi's turnabout? Terms of the all-party resolution were not met. Yet the man who wondered aloud "do we need this government?" withdrew the threat of resignation of members of parliament. Terms of the all-party resolution were not met. Yet Karunanidhi said, "The opinions of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and the External Affair Minister are congruent with the decision taken at the all-party meeting on October 14, 2008 underscoring the need for a negotiated political solution to the Sri Lankan Tamils' problem". Why the turnabout? Did the External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee, who was sent to Chennai by Congress Party President Sonia Gandhi, threaten or intimidate the Tamil Nadu chief minister?

6.2 Narayan-Karunanidhi Meeting of 2006

We recall another meeting between the Tamilnadu chief minister and two high level Indian Government representatives in November 2006. This was at a time the present round of war was starting after 4 years of peace; Chief Minister Karunanidhi and many political leaders in Tamil Nadu raised concern about Tamil civilian casualties; there were

street demonstrations (although not as large as the current ones); there was an unanimous resolution passed by Tamil Nadu State Assembly condemning the massacre of Tamils in Sri Lanka. After being reticent in the beginning, Karunanidhi made a somewhat strong statement asking Indian government to persuade Sri Lanka to end the war. On November 9, 2006, after condemning the killings of Sri Lankan Tamil civilians, he asked, "How long was India going to keep patience?"

Indian Government dispatched two top-level Indian government officials, National Security Adviser M.K. Narayanan and Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon to Chennai. They met Chief Minister Karunanidhi and his grandnephew and Indian government minister Dayanidhi Maran on November 24, 2006. No meeting notes (if any) or other details of this meeting was made public. After the meeting Karunanidhi made a turnabout although Indian government did not agree to do anything to stop Tamil civilian killings. National Security Advisor M.K. Narayanan told reporters after the meeting that Indian government and Tamil Nadu State government have identical views on the Sri Lankan question. Dayanidhi Maran echoed the view that the State [Tamilnadu State Government] agrees with the views of the Centre [Indian Central Government]". In the ensuing days, weeks, months and the two years (2006 to present) India did not do anything to end Tamil civilian killings. Not only that, India continued to provide training, equipment and technicians to the Sri Lankan military.

6.3 What was the Reason for the Turnabout?

What was the reason for chief minister's turnabout after these meetings (one in 2006 with M.K.Narayanan and Shivshankar Menon, and the one in 2008 with Pranab Mukherjee)? Indian government's position did not change. India not only did not call for a ceasefire but continued to help the Sri Lankan military with training, equipment and technicians. What is the reason? Did the Indian government privately threaten the chief minister if he did not tone down? What could the Indian government do? It has the power to dismiss his state government and also arrest him for "anti-national activities". Already Karunanidhi's political opponents in Tamilnadu had asked for the dismissal of his government and his arrest, saying that calling for ceasefire was tantamount to supporting the Sri Lankan Tamil fighters LTTE which is a banned organization in India.

7. A Dossier on Tamil Nadu Chief Minister

Indian government may even have a dossier on Chief Minister Karunanidhi compiling reasons for dismissing his government and arresting him? We do know that when Karunanidhi was chief minister during 1989-1991 the Indian intelligence agency IB (Intelligence Bureau) prepared reports against him and submitted them to the office of Prime Minister V. P. Singh. No action was taken because Karunanidhi had cordial relations with Prime Minister V. P. Singh. His successor Prime Minister Chandrashekhar dismissed the Karunanidhi government in 1991 using information from the intelligence reports provided by IB. The intelligence officer who sent these reports was Mr. M.K. Narayanan; the same Narayanan who is now the National Security Advisor.

The fact that Intelligence Bureau prepared and submitted reports on the Tamil Nadu chief minister was revealed in 1995 during Jain Commission hearings on Rajiv Gandhi assassination. DMK argued that the reports were fabricated behind the back of the DMK for the sole purpose of maligning it and to dismiss the democratically elected state government. Only a few may know the full truth whether the reports were fabricated, exaggerated or real. Is there a similar report in the hands of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh now, which can be used to dismiss or even arrest Chief Minister Karunanidhi?

[Note: Indian Government can dismiss a state government without giving any valid reason and any reason given need not have to stand review by an independent court.]

8. Can Tamil Nadu Do Anything to Help Sri Lankan Tamils?

Foreign policy and military affair are the sole responsibility of the Indian central government. Other than bringing political and moral pressure on the central government, Tamil Nadu cannot do anything to bring about a ceasefire and thus end the killings of Tamil civilians in Sri Lanka. We have seen that neither moral nor political pressure has worked. Even the threat of the resignation of members of parliament from DMK, CPI, PMK and MDMK had not brought about a change in Indian government policy and actions.

In short, there is nothing Tamil Nadu could do to help Sri Lankan Tamils. Karunanidhi put it thus. He said, "**Raja Raja Cholan conquered Sri Lanka. Today Tamils are destroyed there and we (Tamil Nadu) are in such a pathetic situation that we could not help them. This situation should change**" (November 23, 2008). [Note: Raja Raja Cholan was one of the greatest kings in Tamil Nadu (985-1014 AD); he conquered Sri Lanka in 1002 AD and assumed the title Sinhalanthahan.]

Not only in the case of Sri Lankan Tamils, Tamil Nadu was a mere spectator with hand tied even as Sri Lankan Navy had shot and killed hundreds of Tamil Nadu fishermen in the sea, and mobs in Karnataka State murdered and raped Tamils following Indian Supreme Court verdict favoring Tamil Nadu on the Cauvery water issue. In both instances Tamilnadu chief minister pleaded and begged the Indian prime minister to protect the Tamils with no avail.

9. Murmurs of Tamil Nadu Independence

9.1 Samarasinghe's Statement

Coming back to Sri Lankan Tamils, there is only way Tamil Nadu could have protected Sri Lankan Tamils. Answer comes from Sri Lanka Broadcasting Chairman Hudson Samarasinghe. He said, "In the event of Tamil Nadu becoming an independent country there is absolutely no doubt that she will invade Sri Lanka over the Tamil issue" (August 4, 2008).

9.2 Pandian's Statement

Even Tamil Nadu political leaders who do not advocate independence for Tamil Nadu have cautioned India that people of Tamil Nadu may be driven towards independence if India stands aside even as Tamil civilian are being killed in Sri Lanka. D. Pandian, Tamil Nadu General Secretary of CPI made the following points in an interview with Sri Lankan paper Sunday Leader (December 7, 2008).

"Because, the Tamil people [of Tamil Nadu] feel, despite the unanimous resolution passed in the state assembly, despite speaking through the Chief Minister and all the political parties, when the [Indian] central government is turning a blind eye to all these requests, then comes a big question as to where are we as Indians in India.... I may not raise it [independent Tamil Nadu] because I belong to the Communist Party of India (CPI). I may keep mum. The Congress Party may keep mum. But, we can't keep the mouths and the hearts of the people of Tamil Nadu....As a disciplined political party due to our ideology and commitments, I may not speak for separation or division of India. But, not my son. I can't prevent my son from speaking about it or taking up the flag."

[First Published: January 2009]

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14.
Agony and Impotence of a Tamil Nadu Chief Minister within the Indian Union

Thanjai Nalankilli

[This article, written in mid-2009, relates to the reaction in Tamil Nadu in late 2008 and early 2009 as tens of thousands of Tamil civilians were being killed in Sri Lanka by Sri Lankan military aerial bombing and artillery shelling.]

OUTLINE

1. Powerlessness of Tamil Nadu
2. Chief Minister's Plea in Humility and Supplication
3. Sixty Million Population of Tamil Nadu
4. This Situation Should Change
5. D. Pandian Speaks

1. Powerlessness of Tamil Nadu

Thousands of Tamil civilians were killed by the Sri Lankan military during the first few months of 2009 (United Nations reported the death toll as 20000). About sixty million Tamils live in the Indian state of Tamilnadu just about a hundred kilometers from the killing fields of Sri Lanka. They were unable to do anything about it except to watch it with tears in their eyes and sadness in their heart, because diplomatic and military power lies with the Indian government that is dominated and controlled by Hindi politicians. People of Tamil Nadu, although they pay taxes dutifully to the Indian government, have no say even as their brethren were massacred by the tiny Sri Lanka that is no match in military and diplomatic power to India by a wide margin.

2. Chief Minister's Plea in Humility and Supplication

The highest elected leader of Tamil Nadu, Chief Minister Muthuvel Karunanidhi, was powerless to do anything to protect the fellow Tamils of neighboring Sri Lanka. Humanitarian agencies around the world warned of the impending civilian tragedy in Sri Lanka. With no military or diplomatic power of his own as the head of a state in the mighty "regional power" India, all he could do was to beg and plead with the Indian government to save his brethren in Sri Lanka. He repeatedly asked the Indian government to put pressure on Sri Lanka to bring about a ceasefire but the Indian government continued to train Sri Lankan military officers and also provided diplomatic cover in the United Nations. Sri Lanka openly stated that India never asked it to enter into a ceasefire. This proud octogenarian politician, five times chief minister of the state, literally begged India. Here is a plea in humility and supplication. On December 26, 2008, Karunanidhi appealed again to India to bring about a ceasefire, saying that every minute of delay cost one more Tamil life. Then he added, "**with tears in my eyes I am making this request**".

Karunanidhi is a veteran Tamilnadu politician of six decades; democratically elected as state chief minister five times (1969-71, 1971-76, 1989-91, 1996-2001 and 2006-present). He was not only making his personal plea to protect his brethren Tamils in Sri Lanka, he was making the plea on behalf of the 60 million people of the state. In an opinion poll conducted in Tamil Nadu by Loyola College in January 2009, ninety percent of the people surveyed wanted an immediate ceasefire.

3. Sixty Million Population of Tamil Nadu

The State of Tamil Nadu, with a population, land area, coastal stretch and gross domestic product (GDP) greater than half the countries of the world, could easily have been a country on its own. Yet the leader of this 60-million people state was totally powerless to protect fellow Tamils from the military of Sri Lanka of 20 million people and economy much smaller than that of Tamil Nadu and technological development much less. Had Tamilnadu been an independent country, Sri Lanka would be no match to it and, in fact, would not dare to massacre Tamils. But Tamil Nadu is a mere state within India with no military or diplomatic power of its own. Powerless to do anything of his own, the chief minister was reduced to begging the Indian government to protect his people in Sri Lanka. Read his plea to the Indian government again. Don't you hear the agony and utter desperation and powerlessness in his voice? Voice of the chief minister of 60-million people.

4. This Situation Should Change

Initially Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Karunanidhi publicly criticized India's anti-Tamil policies and actions in Sri Lanka and even threatened with the resignation of his party's members of parliament. India turned a blind eye and a deaf ear, and did not change its policies or actions [Chapter 13]. Karunanidhi did not speak up against Indian government actions any more. Yet his sadness, his feeling of powerlessness comes through in some of the statements.

On November 23, 2008, the chief minister said, "**Raja Raja Cholan conquered Sri Lanka. Today Tamils are destroyed there and we (Tamil Nadu) are in such a pathetic situation that we could not help them. This situation should change**" (November 23, 2008). [Note: Raja Raja Cholan was one of the greatest kings in Tamil Nadu (985-1014 AD); he conquered Sri Lanka in 1002 AD and assumed the title Sinhalanthahan.]

On January 24, 2009, he said, "**We are like a man without hands and dumb, who is not able to protect the butter from the scorching sun**." He further added, "We know what we can do and what the Indian government can do". He knows Indian government could easily stop the war in neighboring tiny Sri Lanka and also knows the Tamil Nadu state government is powerless. He continued in desperation, "How are we going to save them?" In the end Tamilnadu was not able to save the Tamils of Sri Lanka. 20000

civilians killed in Sri Lankan Air Force bombing and army shelling. 300000 held in camps surrounded by barbed wires and patrolled by gun totting Sinhala soldiers.

5. D. Pandian Speaks

Will this situation change? **Are the people of Tamil Nadu forever doomed to be powerless and at the mercy of Hindi politicians who rule India?** Warning of a possible outcome came from an unexpected quarter. D. Pandian, Tamil Nadu General Secretary of Communist Party of India (CPI), made the following points in an interview with Sri Lankan paper Sunday Leader (December 7, 2008).

"**Because, the Tamil people** [of Tamil Nadu] feel, despite the unanimous resolution passed in the state assembly, despite speaking through the Chief Minister and all the political parties, when the [Indian] central government is turning a blind eye to all these requests, then comes a big question as to where are we as Indians in India.... I may not raise it [independent Tamil Nadu] because I belong to the Communist Party of India (CPI). I may keep mum. The Congress Party may keep mum. But, we can't keep the mouths and the hearts of the people of Tamil Nadu....As a disciplined political party due to our ideology and commitments, I may not speak for separation or division of India. But, not my son. I can't prevent my son from speaking about it or taking up the flag."

(NOTE: Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi is the president of Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), one of the two dominant political parties in Tamil Nadu.)

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15.
Indian School Textbook from NCERT Distorts History of Dravidian Parties

Thanjai Nalankilli

Abbreviations

CBSE - Central Board of Secondary Education
DMK - Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
NCERT - National Council of Educational Research and Training

The recent Class XII Political Science text book, prepared under the auspicious of the Indian government funded National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), titled "Politics in India since Independence" (First Edition 2007), has a section titled "Dravidian movement" in pages 152 and 153. Was the information in these 2 pages correct? Professor Dr. A.Ramasamy and Professor Dr. N.K.Mangalamurugesan, President and Secretary of Dravidian Historical Research Centre wrote a letter to the Indian Human Resources Development Minister Kapil Sibal pointing out **three mistakes in the history of Dravidian parties**, as well as a separate criticism about the way the 1965 Tamil Nadu Students Anti-Hindi Agitation was portrayed. Here we limit ourselves to the examination of just one mistake in the history of Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK).

The textbook says, "The DMK made its entry into politics with a three pronged agitation in 1953-54". Then it lists the three. That is where the "lie" comes in. The NCERT textbook says, "The second agitation was for giving Tamil cultural history greater importance in school curricula". **This is absolutely false.**

What is the truth? DMK's website (as archived on August 30, 2011) lists the three agitations of 1953 (https://web.archive.org/web/20110830072825/http://www.dmk.in/agit.html). We reproduce the content of that page here.

"In 1953, to protect the self-respect of the Tamils, the DMK launched a three-pronged agitation with the objectives of:

1. *Renaming the Railway station Dalmiapuram (named after a Private Company) as Kallakudi since the latter was the original name of the place, under the leadership of Dr. Kalaignar.*

2. *Withdrawal of the caste-based education policy* of the Congress Government led by Rajaji* and,

3. *Demanding unconditional apology from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru for insulting the people of TamilNadu.*

This agitation became a landmark in the history of DMK."

There is no mention of "agitation for giving Tamil cultural history greater importance in school curricula".

What the NCERT textbook has done is remove the "agitation demanding unconditional apology from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru for insulting the people of Tamil Nadu" and replace it with false information. You can get more information about this agitation from the Tamil book "Thee Mu Ka Varalaaru" (DMK History) by T. M. Parthasarathy, Bharathi Nilayam (publisher), Chennai, Fourth Edition 1984 also. T. M. Parthasarathy was with DMK from its very inception and was a member of the first General Committee (pothu kuzhu). The first General-Secretary of DMK C. N. Annadurai wrote a "preface" to the book (pages i - iii). Top DMK leaders M. Karunanidi, Mathiyazhagan, Anbazhagan and Arangannal wrote notes praising the book (pages iv - x). So we may consider this book's description of what happened in 1953 as authentic. This book does not mention " agitation for giving Tamil cultural history greater importance in school curricula" but says the "agitation demanding unconditional apology from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru for insulting the people of Tamil Nadu" (page 146, 150).

Thus we have two authentic sources of information about the agitation -- DMK website and a book written by a senior DMK leader -- both of which contradict the NCERT textbook. Why would the NCERT textbook "falsify" history? Is it because the Indian government funded NCERT did not want future generations to know that there was an agitation in Tamil Nadu against the much revered first Prime Minister of India Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru because he, according to DMK, insulted the people of Tamil Nadu? Whatever the reason, Indian government funded school textbooks **should not falsify Tamil Nadu history** and feed to young students as truth.

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* Official name of the proposed education system was "Modified Scheme of Elementary Education". Very few people used this name except in official documents. Hereditary education policy, hereditary/caste education scheme and Rajaji's education scheme are some of the other names people used. The Tamil name "kula vazhi kalvi thittam" (loosely translated as "caste-based education scheme") is the one used by many of the opponents of the scheme. DMK's English language website also uses the name "caste-based education policy".

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16.
Lessons from History for Tamil Nadu Political Parties

How Tamil Kingdoms Ended in the Fourteenth Century and Is History Repeating in the Twenty First Century?

Thanjai Nalankilli

OUTLINE

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Abbreviations

AIADMK - All India Anna Dravida Munnertra Kazhagam
BJP - Bharatiya Janata Party
DMK - Dravida Munnertra Kazhagam
MDMK - Marumalarchi Dravida Munnertra Kazhagam
NTK - Naam Tamilar Katchi
PMK Paattali Makkal Katchi
VCK - Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi

1. Introduction

It was internal dissentions within the Pandiya Dynasty of Tamil Nadu that led to Delhi sultanate army marching into Tamil Nadu in the 14-th century. Although that northern army left Tamil Nadu after looting, Tamil dynasties never recovered to their former glory

and in fact Tamil Nadu lost its sovereignty, with occasional small kingdoms (or chiefdoms) in the hands of Tamils.

Although most powers over Tamil Nadu reside with the Indian (central) Government, some limited powers is with Tamil Nadu State governments. From 1947-1967, Hindi-centric Congress party ruled Tamil Nadu and implemented policies dictated by party leaders in the north. From 1967-present, Tamil Nadu parties (DMK and AIADMK) are in power in the state and thus in control of the limited state power. Hindi-centric parties like Congress and BJP have not much support in Tamil Nadu after 1967, especially after the 1990s. Unfortunately Tamil Nadu parties like DMK, AIADMK, MDMK, PMK and VCK gave Congress and BJP life support by forming electoral alliances with them. As it happened in the 14-th Century, these northern parties will strike against Tamil Nadu parties at an opportune time and we fear that would bring in Congress or BJP to power in the state and total control of Tamil Nadu from north. Congress did backstab its AIADMK ally in 1988 after the death of AIADMK founder Chief Minister M. G. Ramachandran but could not take control of the state government. Next time Congress or BJP may succeed.

Beware. Learn from history. First let us look at some historical events in the 12-th and 14-th centuries and then discuss current politics.

2. Brief Sinhala Occupation of Parts of Tamil Nadu in the Twelfth Century

2.1 History

During the Twelfth Century, Tamil Nadu was divided into three principal kingdoms, namely, Chera Nadu, Chola Nadu and Pandiya Nadu, and ruled by Chera, Chola and Pandiya kings (Chera, Chola and Pandyia dynasties). All three are Tamil dynasties and thus Tamils ruled Tamil Nadu in those days. During the reign of Rajathi Raja Cholan II over Chola Nadu (1163 - 1179), there was a quarrel within the Pandiyan royal family for the throne of Pandiya Nadu. Both Parakkirama Pandiyan and Kulasekhara Pandiyan claimed the throne. Local chieftains within Pandiya Nadu (who ruled small principalities subservient to the Pandiya throne) took sides and a civil war ensued in Pandiya Nadu.

Parakkirama Pandiyan held the capital city of Madurai and Kulasekhara Pandiyan laid siege to it. Instead of keeping the fight within Pandiya Nadu or even seeking help from a fellow Tamil king, Parakkirama Pandiyan sought help from an outsider, the Sinhala king Parakramabahu who was ruling the nearby island of Lanka. (Lanka is today called Sri Lanka. British called it Ceylon when it was part of the British Empire. Tamils used to call it Eelam or Ilankai. In recent years "Tamil Eelam" is used to refer to the historical Tamil homeland in the northern and eastern regions of the island.) Parakramabahu sent an army under the command of a Sinhala general, Lankapura (Lankapuri in Tamil). Before the army reached Pandiya Nadu, Kulasekhara Pandiyan capture Madurai and killed Parakkirama Pandiyan. His son Veera Pandiyan fled the capital and went into hiding. By now the Sinhala army landed in Pandiya Nadu with orders from King Parakramabahu to defeat Kulasekhara Pandiyan and put Veera Pandiyan on the throne. The Sinhala army

captured the coastal town of Rameshwaram and destroyed much of the famed Hindu temple for Lord Sivan (Lord Siva).

The Sinhala army marched from the coast into the interior of Pandiya Nadu. It looted and burned many Tamil villages on the way. In the ensuing battles between the Sinhala army and Kulasekhara Pandiyan's army, the latter met with defeat after defeat. Lankapura brought Veera Pandiyan from hiding and installed him as the Pandiya king in Madurai.

Kulasekhara Pandiyan gathered all forces in Pandiya Nadu loyal to him and waged war again and won a major victory against Lankapura. Veera Pandiyan fled Madurai again. Sri Lankan King Parakramabahu sent reinforcements under the command of another Sinhala General, Jagat Vijaya (Jagat Vijayan). The combined forces of Lankapura and Jagat Vijaya defeated Kulasekhara Pandiyan. The latter fled to the south (what is now known as Thirunelveli District) and sought help from the Chola King Rajathi Raja Cholan II. Rajathi Rajan sent an army under General Pallavarayan (Pallavarayar) to Pandiya Nadu. He fought several battles with the Sinhalese army. Some of the major battles were at Thirukkanapaer, Thondi, Pasipon Amaravathi, Manamerkudi and Manjakudi. In the end Sinhalese army lost and Kulasekhara Pandiyan became king of Pandiya Nadu.

Furious at reports of the devastation of Pandiya Nadu under the Sinhala army (looting and burning of villages, killing of villagers, desecration of the Rameswaram temple), Rajarthiraja Cholan ordered General Pallavarayan to capture and execute General Lankapuri who commanded the Sinhala army in Pandiya Nadu. Pallavarayan pursued Lankapuri, captured him and beheaded him. The severed head was hoisted on a spear at the gates of Madurai, the Pandiyan capital. Crows and other birds ate the flesh of the head, and the skull remained on display at the gates for months. Thus ended the occupation of Pandiya Nadu (about one-third of Tamil Nadu) by the Sinhalese army. [NOTE: The beheading and the public display of the severed head may look uncivilized and barbaric today but it was not an uncommon practice in those days. Today war criminals are executed in private (example: many German and Japanese officers were executed after the Second Word War in the 1940s).]

2.2 Lessons to be Learned

At the root of this bloody and shameful episode in Tamil history is the feud within the royal family of the Pandiya dynasty. Unable to settle their differences within the family as to who should ascend to the throne, they fight. Then the loser, instead of accepting defeat, seeks help, not from a fellow Tamil king, but from a foreigner (Sinhalese king). He allows the foreign army to come to Tamil Nadu. The foreign army comes in, puts its puppet on the throne and plunders and loots the Tamil land. The foreign soldiers, who are alien to Tamil culture and have no respect for the Tamil people, brutalize the Tamil people. It took the military might of another Tamil king (the Chola king) to evict the occupying foreign army (the Sinhala army) from Pandiya Nadu. Much blood was shed in this liberation war.

3. Malik Kafur's Invasion of Tamil Nadu in the Fourteenth Century

3.1 History

Chola kings who dominated Tamil Nadu for over two centuries (approximately 950 AD to 1200 AD) waned, and Pandiya kings had the upper hand for the next century (approximately 1200 AD to 1300 AD). End of the Pandiya dynasty as a major force, and in fact the *end of Tamil Nadu as sovereign kingdoms ruled by Tamil kings of the Chera, Chola and Pandiya dynasties, came about because of internal squabbles again within the Pandiya royal family.

King Maravarman Kulasekhara Pandiyan (1268 - 1310) had two sons Jatavarman Sundara Pandiyan and Jatavarman Veera Pandiyan. The elder son, Sundara Pandiyan, was by the king's wife and the younger, Veera Pandiyan, was by a mistress. Contrary to tradition, the king proclaimed that the younger son would succeed him. This enraged Sundara Pandiyan. He killed the father and became king in 1310. Some local chieftains in the kingdom swore allegiance to the younger brother Veera Pandian and a civil war broke out. Sundara Pandiyan was defeated and he fled the country. He sought help from the far off northern ruler Sultan Ala-ud-din Khilji who was ruling much of northern India from Delhi. At that time, his army under General Malik Kafur was in the south at Dvarasamudra (far to the north of Tamil Nadu). Khilji agreed to help Sundara Pandiyan and ordered Malik Kafur's army to march to Tamil Nadu. With Sundara Pandiyan's assistance, this northern army entered Tamil Nadu in 1311. The army engaged in looting as it passed through Tamil Nadu. Many historians believe that Malik Kafur in Dvarasamudra was not planning to march south all the way to Tamil Nadu. Sultan Ala-ud-din Khilji of Delhi might never have sent Malik Kafur to Tamil Nadu but for Sundara Pandiyan's request for help. Thus Malik Kafur's march into Tamil Nadu and the subsequent sufferings of Tamil people was a direct result of the internal quarrel in the Pandiyan royal family.

Once inside Tamil Nadu and his army well entrenched with not much opposition, Malik Kafur turned on Sundara Pandiyan also, whom he came to help. The latter fled Madurai to southern Pandiya Nadu. Malik Kafur looted Madurai also. Sultan Ala-ud-din Khilji and Malik Kafur never intended to conquer and hold Tamil Nadu as part of the Delhi Sultanate; looting Tamil Nadu was their aim all along. So, having accomplished what he came for, he did not occupy Tamil Nadu but turned back north. (Sundara Pandiyan's uncle Vikrama Pandiyan did win a couple of battles against Malik Kafur but many historians do not believe it to be the reason for Malik Kafur leaving Tamil Nadu. Whatever the reason, Malik Kaur left with his loot.) His army was in Tamil Nadu for only a few months. During this period he gathered (looted) gold, precious stones, horses and elephants from the Tamil land. He is said to have taken over 90,000 maunds of gold, unspecified numbers of jewelry and famed Pandiyan pearls, 23,000 horses and 612 elephants.

This was the very first time Tamil Nadu was plundered by a ruler from Delhi. Today, some 700 years later, after so many invasions by so many foreigners, Tamil Nadu is once

again being economically discriminated by the new Hindi politicians in New Delhi. The Hindi dominated Government of India that came into existence in 1947 economically discriminates against Tamil Nadu and some other non-Hindi states by a variety of governmental mechanisms [Reference 1]. The "mode of transferring wealth" has changed but the effect is the same. Malik Kafur took the wealth in sacks of gold and boxes of jewels. Today's Indian Government takes the wealth through sophisticated fiscal policies that favor mostly Hindi states. Here is an example of how monies are transferred from Tamil Nadu to Hindi states.

For every 100 Rupees Indian government collects in taxes from Tamil Nadu, only 40 Rupees is given back to Tamil Nadu in the form of financial grants, central government projects, etc. Now compare it to the largest Hindi state Uttar Pradesh. For every 100 Rupees Indian government collects in taxes from Uttar Pradesh, 176 Rupees is given to Uttar Pradesh in the form of financial grants, central government projects, etc. [Reference 2]. Other South Indian states also are economically discriminated similarly. Malik Kafur took the gold and jewels at the point of the sword. Today the Indian Government also enforces its biased fiscal policies by the power of the parliament dominated by Hindi politicians.

3.2 Lessons to be Learned

We have the same lesson as from the Sinhala army marching into Tamil Nadu (Section 2.2). Quarrel between two rulers within Tamil Nadu. Loser invites outsider to help, the outsider comes in and loots Tamil Nadu.

Are we repeating the same mistake now? Are our internal quarrels between political parties, and even within political parties, giving outside parties (Hindi-centric parties like Congress and BJP) a foothold in Tamil Nadu? Let us look into it.

4. Tamil Nadu Lost its Sovereignty with the Malik Kafur Invasion (14-th Century)

The three Tamil kingdoms under Cheras, Cholas and Pandiyas did not rise again after Malik Kafur, except in some small parts of Tamil Nadu. As Tamil Nadu lay weakened, outsiders marched in and ruled Tamil lands, seldom as a single unit but as smaller kingdoms (or chiefdoms). Tamil Nadu was under an assortment of foreigners, for example, the Sultans, Vijayanagars, Nayaks, Maharashtrians and Nawabs. Even during this time of foreign rule, some parts of Tamil Nadu were independent of foreign rule and were under Tamil chieftains for brief periods of time.

Then came the Europeans. They came as traders but ended up as rulers. After a series of alliances and wars, in the end, almost all of Tamil Nadu except for Pondicherry came under British rule. (Pondicherry was under French rule.) British-ruled parts of Tamil Nadu and parts of Tamil Nadu were called the Madras Province and ruled from New Delhi (and goes up to British capital London). British colonial rule of Tamil Nadu from Delhi lasted for about a century. It is worth noting that, *before the British rule, Tamil Nadu was ruled from Delhi as part of some type of Indian empire for only about ten years

(first during the Delhi Sultanate of Mohammad-bin-Tughlug and then during the Moghul Empire of Aurangzeb).

British left India in 1947 and Indian rule started.

5. Tamil Nadu Politics Today

5.1 Pseudo-Federal India and Glorified Municipal Corporations

The post-British democratic government of India is pseudo-federal in nature. Even in the original Indian constitution of 1950, much of the power resided with the Indian central government and only limited powers given to state governments. Even these limited powers were eroded little by little during the past seven decades. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalthaa said, "The constant attempts to reduce States to the level of glorified Municipal Corporations heavily dependent on the Centre [Indian Government] for funds is a travesty of the federal nature of our existence" (excerpt from Chief Minister Jayalalithaa's April 16, 2012 speech at a conference in New Delhi on internal security).

5.2 End of Congress Rule and Beginnings of Dravidian Party Rule in State

In post-British India (post-1947), Congress Party dominated Tamil Nadu politics for two decades (1947-1967). Congress is a Hindi-centric party; whoever the party president, whoever the Prime Minister of India, even if not from the Hindi-belt, Hindi-belt politicians made the major decisions affecting all of India. The 1967 election saw the fall of Congress and the spectacular rise of Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK). DMK is a Tamil Nadu party; the brutal suppression of the 1967 Tamil Nadu Students Anti-Hindi Imposition Agitation by the Congress governments in the Centre in Delhi and in the state in Chennai (Madras) played a critical role in the fall of Congress and the spectacular victory of DMK. Elections became Tamil Nadu Party (DMK) versus Hindi-centric party (Congress). Then came the split of DMK and formation of All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) in 1972. Soon both DMK and AIADMK had almost equal cadre base. Either DMK or AIADMK is ruling Tamil Nadu ever since 1967 to the present (2014).

5.3 Unnatural Alliances

I have no concern about these two Tamil-centric parties fighting each other in elections. Voters dissatisfied with DMK for one reason or other can vote for AIADMK instead of having to vote for a Hindi-centric party. Soon an untoward political equation developed in Tamil Nadu. Although the Hindi-centric parties (Congress Party and BJP) have very little voter base in Tamil Nadu, DMK and AIADMK started to ally with one or the other; AIADMK, under Jayalalithaa, did shun both parties for the past years and that is good news but Karunanidhi's DMK has alliance with Congress party. We will discuss that Congress is an unreliable ally that will fatally wound you if it gets a chance in Section 4.3.

Whether, in the past couple of decades, Congress or BJP could have won a single seat either for the state assembly or parliament if they contested without allying with one or more Tamil Nadu parties is doubtful. It is DMK, AIADMK and other Tamil Nadu parties like MDMK, PMK and VCK that are providing sustenance to Congress and BJP. I want to point out that on issues like language policy, devolution of power to states and central government tax distribution to states, Congress and BJP have almost the same view and Tamil Nadu parties have diametrically opposite views.

5.4 How Congress Betrayed AIADMK in 1988

Congress and BJP are not happy playing second fiddle to Tamil Nadu parties but they know they may not be able to win even a single seat without one or more Tamil Nadu parties' support. Whenever they see an opportunity, they did and would strike their Tamil allies to gather power in Tamil Nadu, the power Congress lost in 1967 and BJP never had in Tamil Nadu. Here is an example.

Year 1987. AIADMK was the ruling party in the state. AIADMK was allied with Congress Party. AIADMK founder Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran was very popular and his party did not need Congress Party support to govern Tamil Nadu; AIADMK had the majority in state assembly on its own. His untimely death (on December 24, 1987) created a spilt in the party. One faction was headed by his widow Janaki and the second by the party's Propaganda Secretary Jayalalithaa. Some AIADMK Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) supported Janaki faction and the others Jayalalithaa faction. Neither faction had a majority in the legislative assembly to rule Tamil Nadu.

State legislative assembly met on January 28, 1988 so Jankai could prove she has majority members' support in the assembly and continue to govern the state. Congress had promised its support but on the day of the vote it withdrew support thus neither Janaki nor Jayalalithaa could show majority support in the assembly. So governor's rule was imposed. Congress Party seems to have thought it could win the state with AIADMK split and weak. It contested on its own and won only 26 seats out of 232. The two factions of AIADMK also contested and Jayalalthaa faction won 27 and Janaki faction won 2 seats. Thus ended AIADMK rule over Tamil Nadu; DMK won a majority and formed the state government.

Thus ended the saga of Hindi-centric Congress Party's betrayal and backstabbing of its Tamil Nadu ally. Does it remind you of Malik Kafur coming to Tamil Nadu to help Sundara Pandiyan, turning against him and looting Tamil Nadu? History repeated itself. Do not allow it to happen again. Avoid them. Do not bring in a snake in to your paddy field to kill rats. The snake will bite you when you least expect it.

Tamil Nadu parties should think thrice and thrice more allying with Congress. If you keep a snake in your pocket, sooner or later it will bite you.

5.5 No Minister Posts to Hindi-Centric Parties

I want to point out that Hindi-centric parties' (Congress, BJP) decisions on alliances and policies for Tamil Nadu are made by national leaders in New Delhi and not by local leaders in Tamil Nadu. Also, who should lead the party in Tamil Nadu is made by people in New Delhi; thus Congress and BJP leaders in Tamil Nadu are chosen by outsiders. Thus these leaders agree with all that those outsiders say even if those decisions hurt Tamil Nadu. That is why we are concerned about these Hindi-centric parties establishing foothold in Tamil Nadu.

As long as strong leaders like Karunanidhi (DMK), late M. G. Ramachandran (AIADMK) and Jayalalthaa (AIADMK) headed the Tamil Nadu parties, they were able to keep their Hindi-centric allies in place. They never offered minister positions to these parties. They should never be offered minister positions. They will use that as a vehicle to implement their agenda in Tamil Nadu. We see that in some northeastern states where BJP got minister positions. It should never happen in Tamil Nadu.

5.6 An Arabian Fable

It reminds me of a story from Arabia. A man was riding his camel across the desert. Night was approaching. He set up his tent and went inside to sleep. Temperature got a little cold. The camel asked him if it could put his head into the tent. The man allowed it. A little while later the camel asked the man if it could bring in its neck also in. The generous man said ok. A while later the camel asked, "May I come into the tent all the way". The man again agreed. Once in, the camel said, "This tent is too small for the two of us. Why don't you go out and sleep, then I will have enough room in the tent". Tamil Nadu parties should not allow the Hindi-centric parties even a little into the camp. Soon they will be out of power and Hindi-centric parties will rule Tamil Nadu implementing policies decided by Hindi politicians from New Delhi.

5.7 Do not Give any Power to Hindi-Centric Parties in State Government

Even now state governments have very little power (with most powers residing with the Indian Central Government). At least the very little powers of the state government are with DMK or AIADMK since 1967. If they include Hindi-centric Congress or BJP into the ministry by offering them minister or deputy minister positions, these ministers will take orders from their party leaders in New Delhi and implement their agenda in their ministries. They will also increase their party's popularity and voter base in Tamil Nadu (now it is very small) and strike at the right moment to drop their Tamil Nadu allies and form their own Congress or BJP government in the state with their own chief minister selected by their bosses in New Delhi. We will be back to pre-1967 days.

Unless Tamil Nadu parties keep Congress and BJP in check, post-1967 Tamil Nadu parties (Dravidian parties) rule will end in Tamil Nadu. Please do not let it happen. Preferably do not ally with Hindi-centric parties like Congress and BJP, as Chief Minister Jayalalithaa is doing. If not, allocate them limited number of seats commensurate with their strength in the state (proportional to the number of votes they got in the previous election). Under no circumstance, I repeat, under no circumstance, offer these parties

minister positions in the state. We want Tamil Nadu parties (DMK, AIADMK, MDMK, PMK, VCK, NTP) to rule Tamil Nadu.

Tamil Nadu voters can do their share by not voting for Hindi-centric parties even if they are allied with their favourite Tamil Nadu party. Vote for some Tamil Nadu party in that constituency.

5.8 Concluding Remarks

Congress and BJP had been and are Hindi-centric parties, they are led by Hindi politicians even if their party president is non-Hindi. As we said in Section 3.1, for every 100 Rupees Indian government collects in taxes from Tamil Nadu, only 40 Rupees is given back to Tamil Nadu in the form of financial grants, central government projects, etc. Now compare it to the largest Hindi state Uttar Pradesh. For every 100 Rupees Indian government collects in taxes from Uttar Pradesh, 176 Rupees is given to Uttar Pradesh in the form of financial grants, central government projects, etc. [Reference 2]. This plunder of Tamil Nadu (as well as the other 4 South Indian states) continues in both Congress and BJP rules. They are no different in transferring South Indian tax monies to Hindi states. Do you want these political parties to rule Tamil Nadu state? If we are not diligent it could happen sooner or later. May be not next year, but in a couple of decades. Beware of supporting the Hindi-centric parties.

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17.
Political Biography of Tamil Poet Pavalareru Perunjchiththiranar

Thanjai Nalankilli

[This article is also published as a separate "mini-book" because of the many requests from readers.]

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Abbreviations

AIADMK - All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
DK - Dravida Kazhagam
DMK - Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
LTTE - Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MDMK - Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
MGRADMK - MGR Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
PMK - Pattali Makkal Katchi
TMC - Tamil Maanila Congress
TNCC - Tamil Nadu Congress Committee
TNM - Tamil National Movement (Tamilar Thesiya Iyakkam)
TPMK - Tamil Pattali Makkal Katchi

FOREWORD

Tamil nationalist poet Perunjchiththiranar (1933 - 1995) was never a member of a Dravidian party but he worked tirelessly for some of the early Dravidian party ideals. He was a friend and follower of DK founder Periyar E. V. Ramaswamy. His funeral was attended by many Dravidian party leaders. The then DMK President M.Karunanidhi spoke at the memorial service. Tamil Nadu State legislative assembly passed a condolence resolution moved by Finance Minister Nedunchezhian of Chief Minister Jayalalithaa's AIADMK government.

1. Introduction

On June 11, 1995, former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK President M. Karunanidhi was in Madurai attending party business. One of his aides informed him that Mr. Perunchiththiranar had passed away that morning in Chennai. Perunchiththiranar was not a party member or leader, not a family member or a close friend. Still Karunanidhi asked his aide to make arrangements for his immediate return to Chennai to pay him his last respects. Who is this Perunchiththiranar who commanded such respect from one of the most popular and busiest political leaders of Tamil Nadu?

Perunchiththiranar's body was laid to rest on June 16. Those who came to pay homage to him during those 5 days read like the "**Who is Who?**" of the top hierarchy of Tamil Nadu politics. They included heads of DK, DMK, PMK and MDMK. Many other political leaders, noted Tamil scholars and leaders of many Tamil organizations also came to pay their respects. There were unconfirmed reports that Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) leader Prabaharan sent two of his aides from Jaffna into Tamil Nadu clandestinely as his personal emissaries to pay his last respect (LTTE was a banned organization in India).

Several thousand people from all over Tamil Nadu and some from outside of Tamil Nadu came for the funeral procession on June 16. Tamil Nadu State legislative assembly passed a condolence resolution moved by Finance Minister Nedunchezhian of Chief Minister Jayalalithaa's AIADMK government.

Perunchiththiranar has the dubious honor of being jailed under Congress, DMK and AIADMK governments of Tamil Nadu.

Do you know who this Perunchiththiranar is and what his contributions to Tamil people are?

2. A Brief Biography

Perunchiththiranar was born on March 10, 1933 in Salem City, Tamil Nadu to Mr. R. Duraiswamy and Mrs. Kunjammal Duraiswamy. His given name was Manickam. His father was a police constable. He wrote Tamil poems from his school days. He was an excellent poet, later earning even the appreciation and applause of Bharathidasan. He wrote poems to his last days, even from his sick bed about the very last illness that took

him away from his beloved Tamil people. In addition to his given name Manickam, he also wrote under several pen names; the one that stuck with him as he got established as an ardent Tamil Nationalist and freedom fighter was "Perunchiththiranar". He was also known as Pavalareru (lion among poets) in his later years.

He studied up to the intermediate level (2 years of college after high school) at Salem College. Then he worked for the Indian Government from 1952 to 1967. After 1967, he spent his full time publishing three magazines, writing books and lecturing around Tamil Nadu (he also went on lecture tours to Sri Lanka, Singapore, Malaysia, Andaman-Nicobars, England, France, Germany and Switzerland). He married Miss Kamalam (she changed the name later to Thamarai) in 1950. He had 4 daughters and 2 sons. The youngest son Pozhilan was arrested and convicted (along with Arivazhagan, Ilango and Muhilan) for allegedly bombing a TV Relay Station (allegedly because it is a tool for Hindi imposition) and a statue of the first Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru (allegedly because it is a symbol of Indian rule over Tamil Nadu). I believe that he and the three others convicted in the case were released on bail and the guilty verdict is under appeal.

Perunchiththiranar himself was imprisoned 8 times, spending a total of about 27 months in jail, for his various activities relating to Tamil and social reform (Thenmozhi, July 1995; Volume 27: Number 9; page 9). [Some web sites indicate that he was jailed more than 8 times; they may be including the times he was arrested and then released within a few hours]. He has the dubious honour of being imprisoned by Congress, DMK and AIADMK governments of Tamil Nadu as well as when Tamil Nadu was under governor's rule.

3. Overview of Perunjchiththiranar's Service to Tamil

It can be said that Perunchiththiranar served the Tamil people and the Tamil language in every way he could. We provide a brief overview of his service to Tamil.

1. Social reform in Tamil Nadu, including eradication of irrational religious beliefs and superstitions, eradication of the caste system, and ending the hegemony of Brahminism. He spent one month in jail for burning Manu Shastra, which preached caste based "justice system". (Unlike the great social reformer of our time, Periyar E. V. Ramaswamy, Perunchiththiranar believed in one God.)

2. Freedom for Tamil Eelam. He supported the liberation of Tamil Eelam from the very beginning and continued with his support until his death. He was imprisoned twice after the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi because of his continued support for Tamil Eelam; he spent a total of eight-and-a-half months for this.

3. Preserving the purity of Tamil by eliminating all foreign words (Sanskrit, English, etc.) in written and spoken Tamil.

4. Efforts to make Tamil the language of instruction and the language of governance (official language) in Tamil Nadu. His last public speech on April 25, 1995 was at a march in support of making Tamil the language of instruction and governance, organized by the Capital City Tamil Association. The marchers were briefly detained at the police station for violating prohibitory orders, and there he spoke to the marchers.

5. Opposition to Hindi imposition. His first arrest and imprisonment (for two months) was for writing an editorial in support of the 1965 anti-Hindi imposition agitation.

6. Efforts to help impoverished Tamil scholars financially. Perunjsiththiranar was not a wealthy man, so he used his magazines to solicit funds from readers and gave every cent to those scholars. Those he thus helped include Bharathidasan's family (after his death), Ezhaththu Adigal family (after his death), Muthu Kumaraswamy family (after his death), Appathuraiyar family (after his death) and Devaneya Pavanar (during his lifetime). Recently Tamil Nadu government nationalized the books of Bharathidasan, Appathuraiyar and Deveneya Pavanar and gave sizable monies to their families but the same government refused to help them in the 1960's and 1970's when they were suffering. It was Perunchiththiranar who came forward and gave a helping hand to these great Tamil scholars and their families. This goes to show his generosity, empathy and respect for these scholars.

7. Perunchiththiranar was a Tamil scholar in his own right. He published more than 30 books. They include anthology of his poems as well as collection of his articles. Many of his poems are comparable in style and depth to the Kazhagam (Sangam) era poems like Purananooru and Ahananooru. Two of his books have been used as texts in Tamil Nadu universities. At least one doctoral thesis and half a dozen master's theses have been written analyzing his poems. He is truly one of the greatest Tamil poets of the 20th century along with Bharathi and Bharathidasan. (A distinction has to be made between Bharathi and the other two; Bharathidasan and Perunchiththiranar were Tamil nationalists and Bharathi was not).

8. Freedom for Tamil Nadu from Indian rule.

Each one of these services may be discussed in detail but we will leave that to his biographers. We will limit our discussion here to the last item, namely, his fight for independence for Tamil Nadu from Indian rule, because I consider it to be his unique and primary contribution to the Tamil people.

4. Perunchiththiranar and Independence for Tamil Nadu

Perunchiththiranar was not the first one to raise his voice for an independent Tamil Nadu but he was the only one among "popularly known personalities" to work relentlessly towards this goal until his death. Dravida Kazhagam (DK) founder E. V. Ramaswamy (popularly known as Periyar or EVR) and his disciple and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) founder C. N. Annadurai (popularly known as Anna) did demand independence for Tamil Nadu. In fact, Annadurai's DMK won sizable number of seats in the Tamil

Nadu state assembly in the 1962 elections on the "independence" platform. Fearing this electoral approval for independence, the Indian government under the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru passed a law the next year (in 1963) prohibiting parties and persons demanding independence for states from contesting elections. Annadurai immediately gave up his independence demand. As for Periyar, he did stick with the independence demand until his death. His newspaper "Viduthalai" (Independence) did publish a slogan for independent Tamil Nadu in every issue in his later years, but he did very little else for it; his long public service spanning several decades was concentrated on social reforms, especially breaking the stronghold of Brahminism over the Tamil society. Unlike Annadurai, Perunchiththiranar never gave up his demand for independent Tamil Nadu in spite of threats and bribes from the Indian government. Unlike Periyar, Perunchiththiranar considered his fight for independence to be his prime work for the people of Tamil Nadu, although he did work for the Tamil people in other areas also as we listed in Section 3.

5. Perunchiththiranar and Sikh Freedom Fighter Bhinderwale

Perunchiththiranar's demand and fight for an independent Tamil Nadu reached the leaders of other nationalities fighting for the freedom of their own people from Indian rule. One among them was the great Sikh freedom fighter Bhinderwale. During the early 1980s, he sent two of his representatives to Perunchithiranar. The Sikh freedom fighters invited him to visit Punjab and give a series of speeches at various places in support of Khalistan. Perunchithiranar agreed. He was eager to visit Punjab and establish a liaison between Sikhs and Tamils. But, before the tour materialized, the then Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi sent the India army into the holiest of Sikh shrines, the Golden Temple, and killed Bhinderwalle and many other freedom fighters. Perunchiththiranar's tour of Punjab in support of Khalistan never took place.

6. Perunchiththiranar and Armed Freedom Fighters of Tamil Nadu

Though Perunchiththiranar never took a gun in his hand and his only weapons were his pen and a microphone, the Indian government feared him. The Indian government knew that his words could create new of Tamil nationalists (and they did), some of whom could create liberation armies of armed cadres. Though we do not know whether his words inspired the likes of Tamilarasan (founder of Tamil Nadu Viduthalai Padai [Tamil Nadu Liberation Army]) and Rajaraman (founder of Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Padai [Tamil People's Liberation Army]), the Indian government is extremely fearful of the emergence of such armed freedom fighters in its southern flank. Indian security forces spent enormous manpower to crush the Tamil Nadu Viduthalai Padai [Tamil Nadu Liberation Army] and the Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Padai [Tamil People's Liberation Army]. Though Tamilarasan was killed and his successor Ilavarasan was in jail for a while, Tamil Nadu Viduthalai Padai is still active under a new leader whose name is not known. To my knowledge Perunchiththiranar did not have any contact with these groups but he was truly proud of them.

7. Perunchiththiranar's Commitment to Independent Tamil Nadu

Perunchiththiranar's commitment to independent Tamil Nadu was unswerving and constant. Every issue of his monthly magazine contained the following **slogan on the top of page one**.

"Every Tamil should realize that independence for Tamil Nadu should be our very breath, our goal, our policy and our wholehearted effort"("Thamizhaga viduthalai than nam muzhu moochu, noakkam, kolkai, muyarchi endu Tamizharkal ov-vorvarum vunarthal vaendum")

In 1972 he organized the first "**Tamil Nadu Freedom Conference**". I am not a lawyer but I think that talking or writing about independence for Tamil Nadu is not illegal as such because of the guarantee of freedom of speech (check with a lawyer). So the government's tactic was to issue a prohibitory order against the meeting saying that it would "disturb the peace". People, however, attended the conference in spite of the prohibitory order. Perunchiththiranar and some others were arrested for violating the order and he spent a week in jail. He organized similar conferences in 1973 and 1974 also. He participated in the "Tamil Nadu National Self-Determination Conference" organized by the Tamil National Movement (TNM) (Tamil Desiya Iyakkam) President P. Nedumaran in Thanjai in 1990.

In addition to these conferences, he had spoken at hundreds of meetings around Tamil Nadu as well as in Singapore and Malaysia (71 speeches), in Sri Lanka (17 speeches), in Andaman Nicobars (13 speeches) and in Europe (England, France, Germany, Switzerland) (26 speeches). In virtually every meeting he spoke for the need for independence for Tamil Nadu from Indian rule. He believed that independence is the only solution to end the domination of Hindi people and politicians over Tamil Nadu. He believed, rightly so, that DMK and AIADMK governments in Tamil Nadu State cannot bring about the end of that domination.

8. Headlines

His commitment for independent Tamil Nadu is reflected in his writings and speeches. Here are some headlines from his bimonthly magazine "Tamil Nilam (Tamil Land)" (defunct after his death):

"Freedom for Tamil Nadu should be the goal of all of us"

"Independent Tamil Nadu is the Only Solution"

"Tamil Race cannot progress without Independence for Tamil Nadu"

"Unite and speak Up for Tamil Nadu Independence"

"No one can stop the Emergence of Independent Tamil Nadu"

"No Future for the Tamil Race without Independence for Tamil Nadu"

"If Tamil Nadu Freedom Movement fails, Tamil Race will be Extinct in 500 Years"

9. Perunchiththiranar's Following

Perunchiththiranar tried his best to instill a thirst for freedom in Tamil hearts and minds through his writings and speeches. He, indeed, succeeded in creating many thousands of Tamil nationalists working for independent Tamil Nadu, some quietly, some vocally, and possibly some with armed Tamil groups. I personally know that there are Tamil nationalists among professors, teachers, students, doctors, lawyers, engineers, soldiers, air force men, police, government employees, business men-women and movie actors (Perunchiththiranar may not be credited to everyone of them but surely he deserves credit for a majority of them). Many Tamil people do not recognize that Perunchiththiranar created a force and momentum that is sure to change the history of Tamil Nadu, and with it the history of the Indian subcontinent and South Asia. Many Tamils who do not know the extent of what he has created, ridicule him as one with no mass appeal; even they were surprised at the number of people who came to pay their final respects after his death. Surely he did not have the following of Annadurai or Karunanidhi or M.G. Ramachandran or Jayalalitha but it is Perunchiththiranar's work that would make a revolutionary change in Tamil history and not that of the DMK or AIADMK leaders. Their impact on Tamil Nadu history is minor compared to what Periyar did and what Perunchiththiranar did, the latter's impact will be felt in the coming several decades.

10. Indian Attempts to Silence Perunchiththiranar

While most Tamils do not know the full extent of Perunchiththiranar's work and, especially, its potential impact on the future course of Tamil Nadu history and thus the history of the Indian subcontinent itself, there was one powerful organization that realized it. That organization was none other than the Government of India.

Of all the organizations and leaders in Tamil Nadu, the Indian government probably feared Perunchiththiranar the most because he demanded independence for Tamil Nadu stedfastedly for almost four decades. Perunchiththiranar's independence demand, if achieved, would end the cultural domination of Hindi and the economic benefits of Hindi regions because of the discriminatory economic policies of the Indian government in favour of Hindi states. The Indian Government, dominated and controlled by Hindi politicians, set out to silence Perunchiththiranar one way or other.

As we stated in Sections 7 and 8, Perunchiththiranar's main platform were his three magazines through which he propagated his demand for independence for Tamil Nadu. Police officers visited his editorial office, questioned him about his activities and threatened him that his writings were anti-national (anti-Indian). Perunchiththiranar was not one to be silenced easily. He continued to publish the magazines and continued write about the need for independence for Tamil Nadu in spite of further visits from police. Indian government could not shut down his magazines or silence him thus.

In the early to mid 1980s, when Rajiv Gandhi was the Prime Minister of India, the Indian government considered imprisoning Perunchiththiranar, alleging that he was a threat to national security (as it did with the "Lion of Kashmir", the late Sheikh Abdullah, in the 1960s when he raised his voice for independent Kashmir). But the Indian intelligence warned the government that any long-term imprisonment of Perunchiththiranar could result in Tamil nationalists turning to violence in retaliation. This would result in more publicity for the Tamil Nadu Independence Movement within India and abroad. So Rajiv Gandhi abandoned the idea.

11. Perunchiththiranar and Rajiv Gandhi ("the bribe")

Having failed to silence Perunchiththiranar by threats, the Indian government tried an alternate plan. It took to heart the old proverb "you can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar".

In 1985, the then Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi sent his top confidante in Tamil Nadu, Mr. G. K. Moopanar, to Perunchiththiranar with a proposition. Moopanar met with Perunchiththiranar and told him that Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi would like to meet with him personally. If Perunchiththiranar agrees to drop his demand for independence for Tamil Nadu, the Prime Minister was willing to grant him many "favors". Perunchiththiranar curtly told Moopanar that if what Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi wants from him is to stop his campaign for independent Tamil Nadu, he has no interest in meeting the Prime Minister.

12. Indian Government's Fear of Tamil Nadu Independence Movement

The incidence of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's personal attempts to "bribe" Perunchiththiranar into silence speaks volumes. I often see messages in Internet Newsgroups by Tamils and others belittling Tamil Nadu Independence Movement. Make no mistake about it, Tamil Nadu Independence Movement is real, is multi-faceted, is underground to some extent, and is not the dream of a few "extremists". AS an avowed Tamil nationalist wedded to Tamil Nadu independence, I have met with several hundred Tamils who are for independence (of course the total number of such people are many thousands). They are in every walk of life including soldiers, air force men and police officers. Indian government recognizes that Tamil Nadu Independence Movement has the potential to cause severe problems to Hindi politicians' hegemony over Tamil Nadu and other non-Hindi regions. Indian government fears the emergence of a strong independence movement in its southern flank while it is trying hard to contain the various freedom fighters in the north and the east. That is why the Indian government makes every attempt to silence those who speak up for independent Tamil Nadu. The fact that Perunchiththiranar's campaign for independent Tamil Nadu reached all the way up to the personal attention of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and that he would personally attempt to "bribe" this Tamil nationalist leader to silence is evidence of how much the Hindi people and politicians fear Tamil Nadu Independence Movement.

Obviously Indian Government thinks that Independence for Tamil Nadu is possible. Why else would the Prime Minister of India want to meet with this relatively unknown Perunchiththiranar and ask him to stop his campaign for independent Tamil Nadu? Before Annadurai and Karunanidhi became Tamil Nadu Chief Ministers, no Indian Prime Minister wanted to meet with either to ask them to stop their campaign for autonomy for states. Why? Because Hindi politicians know that the demand for state autonomy is no threat to Hindi imperialism over the non-Hindi states. As long as Tamil Nadu is part of India, Hindi politicians who dominate and control the Indian government decide what powers the states may have irrespective of what Tamil Nadu wants. The Dravidian parties (DMK, AIADMK, MDMK) may and do include state autonomy demand in their election manifestos and even pass resolutions in the state assembly but the Hindi politicians turn a deaf ear to it! In fact the Tamil Nadu assembly did pass a resolution for state autonomy in April 1974 when Karunanidhi (DMK) was the Chief Minister. It is over quarter of a century now. During this time state governments have lost some powers to the Indian government and did not gain any additional powers. So much for autonomy demands and autonomy resolutions by the Tamil Nadu assembly elected by majority of the people of Tamil Nadu!

While Hindi politicians chuckle at Dravidian parties' demand for state autonomy, they are frightened by the Tamil Nadu Independence Movement. They know through Indian intelligence agencies' assessment that independent Tamil Nadu is not just a daydream of Tamil nationalists but it could become a reality. Though armed Tamil Nadu freedom fighters probably number only in the hundreds (no one except those who belong to these groups may know the full extent of their strength), given time and wider public support, they could quickly become several thousand dedicated fighters. If such groups coordinate their efforts with freedom fighters in the north and east, Indian army may have a serious problem and the "Indian Union" may start to unravel. That is the importance of Tamil Nadu Freedom Movement, that is the potential of Tamil Nadu Independence Movement, and that is what frightens the Indian government. That was why the Indian government threatened Perunchiththiranar and failing in that, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi personally intervened to "bribe" him to silence. Perunchiththiranar could have asked for and received virtually any personal favor from Rajiv Gandhi. Lucrative government jobs for him and his family members were for his asking. Rajiv Gandhi would have offered Perunchiththiranar a million rupees if he asked for it. (Congress as well as other parties have bribed politicians with large sums of money for crucial political support. So it would be no problem to offer Perunchiththiranar large sums of money to silence him.)

But Perunchiththiranar was a honorable man. He refused even to meet with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. The Indian government was at a loss as to what to do with this Perunchiththiranar. Indian government, all the way up to the Prime Minister, would have breathed a collective sigh of relief when Perunchiththiranar passed away at the age of 62 (going on 63) on June 11, 1995. Voice of this great Tamil nationalist leader that could not be silenced by threats from the mighty Indian government or by its offers of bribe finally fell silent.

13. Perunchiththiranar's Final Days

Perunchiththiranar fell ill in March 1995. For the next three months, until his death, he was in and out of hospitals and doctor's care. Still he went to out of town meetings. Even in his last days his thoughts were of his duty and service to the Tamil people. I have heard people telling doctors, "doctor, please save me, I want to see my youngest daughter's wedding before I die" or "doctor, please save me, I want to see the birth of my grand child", etc. But this great Tamil nationalist leader said to his doctors, "**there is yet 25 years of service left for me to do. I need to live to finish my work. So please take good care of my body**." Did he think that Tamil Nadu would be free in another 25 years? He passed away on June 11, 1995 at about 7:00 AM in Ramachandra Hospital in Chennai.

14. Karunanidhi's Tribute

DMK President and former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi was in Madurai on June 11 on party business. When he heard of Perunchiththiranar's death he asked his aide to make arrangements for his immediate return to Chennai to pay his last respects. As travel arrangements were being made, further information came that Perunchiththiranar's body will be in refrigeration and will be buried only on June 16 because his third daughter and son in law have to come from America. So Karunanidhi attended to his party business and on his return to Chennai went to the hospital (where Perunchiththiranar's body was kept in refrigeration) to pay his last respect. Later he was also the key speaker at a memorial service. It should be noted that Perunchiththiranar was never a DMK member nor was he a family member or close friend. Only thing that bound Karunanidhi and Perunchiththiranar was their common love for Tamil.

15. "Who is Who" of Tamil Nadu Politics

Many political and non-political leaders, Tamil scholars and social reformers came to pay their last respects between June 11 and June 16. They included some well-known political leaders of Tamil Nadu at that time:

Karunanidhi, President, DMK
Kumari Anandan, Former President TNCC
Nedumaran, President, TNM
Ramadoss, President, PMK
Vaiko, General Secretary, MDMK
Veeramani, President, DK

These leaders are well known to Tamil people because their names are often in newspapers due to their well- publicized political activities. Many other leaders and scholars whose names are not household words but whose contributions to the Tamil society are equally important also came to pay their last respect. The list of names is very long, so I am not including it in this article.

16. Tribute from Tamil Organizations

The following Tamil organizations played a key role in organizing the funeral procession and holding many condolence meetings throughout Tamil Nadu. This list shows the respect and affection Perunchiththiranar had from the wide spectrum of Tamil organizations.

Aathi Tamilar Peravai
Ariviyakka Peravai
Dalit Panpaattu Peravai
Dravida Tamilar Kazhagam
Dravidar Kazhagam
Eela Tamilar Paathukappu Kazhagam
Makkal Kalai Ilakkiya Kazhagam
Makkal Kudiyurimai Kazhagam
Maraimalaiyadigal Manram
Marxiya Periyariya Pothuvudamai Katchi
Painthamil Pasarai
Pannattu Tamil Vuravu Mantram
Puratchi Pavalar Peravai
Puratchikara Ilaigar Munnani
Tamil Chantoar Peravai
Tamil Desiya Forward Bloc
Tamil Eela Viduthalai Munnani
Tamil Ina Thondiyakkam
Tamil Ina Viduthai Kazhagam
Tamil Iyakkam
Tamil Nadu Ilaigar Peravai
Tamil Nadu Marxist-Leninist Katchi
Tamil Nadu Parayar Peravai
Tamil Osai
Tamil Thesa Pothuvudamai Katchi
Tamilaga Odukkappattoar Viduthalai Iyakkam
Tamilaga Tamilasiriyar Kazhagam
Tamilar Munnetra Kazhagam
Tamil-Tamilar Iyakkam
Thalai Nagar Tamil Sangam
Thenmoli Payilunar Avai
Viduthalai Chiruththaikal
Vulaga Tamil Ina Munnetra Kazhagam
Vulaga Tamil Kazhagam
Vuzhaikkum Makkal Viduthalai Iyakkam

(NOTE: I prepared the above list from various sources. If any organization is omitted, I am not ignoring them purposively, I just did not know of their participation. Any organization that works for the welfare of Tamil people is to be respected and recognized even if I do not agree with every one of its policies and objectives.)

17. Tribute from the Tamil Nadu State Legislative Assembly

Finance Minister of the AIADMK Ministry of Tamil Nadu, Nedunchezhian, moved a message of condolence for Perunchiththiranar and the legislative assembly passed it across party lines. Perunchiththiranar was a harsh critic of Chief Minister Jayalalitha, sometimes in a very personal manner. The fact that she allowed such a condolence message to be moved and passed in the assembly is a mark of graciousness on her part (nothing is done in AIADMK without her consent).

18. Last Respects from Prabaharan

A senior Congress(I) leader told reporters that, according to intelligence agencies, LTTE leader Prabaharan sent two of his top leaders as his personal emissaries from Jaffna to Chennai clandestinely to pay his last respects to Perunchiththiranar.

19. The Final March

Perunchiththiranar's funeral was scheduled for June 16, 1995. Tamil organizations posted over 50,000 posters throughout Tamil Nadu informing people of the funeral date. A number of newspapers also published the information.

Perunchiththiranar's body was "placed in state" from 11 AM to 3 PM on June 16 so mourners can see it and pay their respects. The funeral procession started at 3 PM from his home to his final resting place in Medavakkam (suburb of Chennai) some 14 kilometers away (approximately eight-and-a-half miles).

Perunchiththiranar had participated in many marches in service of the Tamil people. This "final march" seems to be the biggest of them all. The procession was about one kilometer long (well over half-a-mile long), and traffic has to be stopped for about an hour and a half on Chennai's main throughway, the Anna Chalai (formerly known as Broadway). The procession was loud and picturesque. People had come from all over Tamil Nadu and some from outside. They shouted slogans all the way. **Slogans (in Tamil) included** "Hero's farewell to Perunchiththiranar" and "We will fulfil the wishes of Tamil Nadu freedom fighter Perunchiththiranar". There were numerous placards displaying slogans and his photographs. It is believed that it is the largest funeral procession in Tamil Nadu for a person who is not a top politician. The size of the procession and the slogans showed the depth of Tamil nationalist feelings in Tamil Nadu. Remember, in a region like Tamil Nadu, coming to Chennai from a village or town 100, 200 or 500 kilometers away by rail or bus (very few have cars) takes time and money. So the number of people who came to the funeral is only the tip of the iceberg.

Perunchiththiranar's body reached his final resting place around 7 PM. It was finally laid to rest at 7:30 PM. Someone said, "We are not burying Perunchiththiranar, we are planting a seed". Perunchiththiranar, in his service to Tamil for almost 40 years, had planted seeds of Tamil nationalism in the hearts and minds of many thousands of Tamils.

20. A Single Individual can make a Difference, You can too...

Perunchiththiranar's life is an example of how a dedicated individual, with no political support and no financial resource, can change the course of the history of a people single handedly.

Perunchiththiranar started his first magazine Thenmoli in 1959 when he was only 26 and working for the post office. He was by no means a rich man. His father was a police constable. Perunchiththiranar had a dream, a vision, a goal. Hindi domination and rule of his country Tamil Nadu bothered him. He wanted it to be free. He dreamed of an independent Tamil Nadu. He wrote of his dream, his vision, his goal, his thirst for independence in his magazine.

He published it at a loss, spending his own money. The magazine was published at that time from Cuddalore where he worked. Very few knew of him. Very few heard of his magazine. Slowly and steadily the magazine's popularity increased, especially among college students. One student told another, another told another, and so on. Perunchiththiranar became almost a cult figure among some college students.

Some students took it upon themselves to solicit subscriptions for the magazine. One such benefactor was a student at St. John's College in Thiruchi (Trichi), named Saththiah. I believe that he got more subscriptions than anyone else did at that time. He later changed his name to Thamizh Kudimagan. Yes, it is the same Thamizh Kudimagan who is now the Minister of Tamil Development in the present Tamil Nadu state government of Chief Minister Karunanidhi.

Students not only solicited subscriptions but those studying in nearby towns came to Cuddalore to help print, collate and bind the magazine. Students came long distances by bicycle to do voluntary work for the magazine.

Readership increased and the magazine was no longer running at a loss. No, it did not make him rich; magazine's circulation was only a very small fraction of popular entertainment magazines like Kumudam or political magazines like Murasoli. He left his post office job in the late 1960s and devoted his full time to writing. Schools, colleges and Tamil associations around Tamil Nadu invited him to speak at their meetings. The yearning for independence for Tamil Nadu was seeded in thousands of Tamil hearts. He single handedly kept the flames of freedom alive in Tamil Nadu. This one man's work scared the Indian government so much that the Prime Minister of India wanted to meet with him and personally persuade him to drop his demand for independence for Tamil Nadu (see Section 11).

Perunchiththiranar is **an inspiration** to all of us, as to what one ordinary person, with no financial resources or political support can do if he or she set his/her mind to it. Many of us may not make the level of impact he made on Tamil society; it does not matter, even a small impact when multiplied by hundreds and thousands can move a mountain. But each

one of us has to do something, whatever we can do for Tamil, Tamil Nadu and Tamil people. Let us do what we can.

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